THE CHOIRTRAINER'S ART

A. MADELEY RICHARDSON

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Yours very sincerely

A. Maddry Richardson

THE
CHOIRTRAINER'S ART

BY

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(LATE ORGAN SCHOLAR AND THEOLOGICAL PRIZEMAN OF KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD; FOR TWELVE YEARS ORGANIST AND DIRECTOR OF THE CHOIR OF SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL; LATE MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS; AUTHOR OF "CHURCH MUSIC" FOR THE CLERGY; "THE PSALMS, THEIR STRUCTURE AND MUSICAL RENDERING;" THE SOUTHWARK PSALTER; "MODERN ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT;" ETC.)

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To

Sir George Martin

M.V.O., Mus. Doc., Organist of
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CONSTITUTION AND MANAGEMENT OF A CHOIR

PART I

CONSTITUTION AND MANAGEMENT OF A CHOIR

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THE CHOIRTRAINER'S ART

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Choirs are of many kinds, from the Cathedral Choir at one end of the scale to the humblest village choir at the other. In dealing with choirs of varying capacity the choirmaster's work and methods will vary greatly as to detail, but the general principles upon which they are grounded, and his attitude and feelings towards choir singers, will remain the same, only expressing themselves in different forms and by different channels.

In the following pages an attempt will be made to assist all choirmasters, whether they be the humble directors of village choirs or whether they be the dignified choragi and precentors of Cathedral foundations.

The importance of choir work at the present time can hardly be overestimated. As I have said on a former occasion, the standard of Church music is steadily going up. The desire is felt, and is being expressed in all directions, that the important side of religious life represented by choir singers should receive due and proper attention.

The efficiency of the Church, and the strength of the cause of religion itself, depend ultimately upon the way in which each separate department is conducted. Of all these departments, that of music, the Handmaid of Religion, is certainly not the least important.

The compelling power of music, and especially of vocal music, has been recognized from the beginning of the world. The poet declares:

> Silvestres homines sacer interpresque deorum
> Caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus.
> Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidosque leones;

> Dictus et Amphion, Thebanae conditor urbis,
> Saxa movere sono testudinis et prece blanda
> Ducere, quo vellet.*

When at its best, music is a persuasive force stronger than rhetoric, a force which can be appealed to where all others fail. Remembering this, it is seen how great importance is rightly attached to Church music—an importance that has been emphasized by the leaders of religious thought in all ages.

With the rapid spread and growth of musical education in all directions and in all classes of society at the present day, it is clear that the Church must not, and cannot, remain unaffected. It must strive to keep in line with the advance of education. It must even go further, and try to lead public taste and to guide it into the best channels.

With the general questions of musical education and artistic teaching it is not within the scope of the present volume to deal. But the art of choir-training cannot be unaffected by them, and the best choirmaster will be the one who rightly balances his ideas and work with things around and outside him, and who values at its correct standard the importance of his work not merely as an end in itself, but also as a part of, and link in, a wider and greater whole.

The study of choir-training comprises three branches of knowledge, dealing respectively with the general scope and management of choirs; the training and production of the voice, and its musical instruction; and the rendering of Church music in a true, correct and artistic manner. Equal attention should be given to each of these three branches in the order in which I have placed them. None is sufficient without the others; the three welded together will give a complete and finished whole.

* Horace, 'De Arte Poetica': "Orpheus, the priest and interpreter of the gods, made uncivilized men abstain from bloodshed and savage diet; so that he was reputed, on this account, to have tamed tigers and raging lions. Amphion also, the builder of the Theban citadel, was said to move stones by the sound of his lyre, and by soothing allurements to lead them wherever he wished." (Bagot's translation.)

CHAPTER II

THE CHOIRMASTER

Before discussing the management of a choir it will be advisable to consider the personality of the choirmaster himself. The choir depends upon the choirmaster. As is his personality, so will be that of the choir. The choir is the instrument upon which he plays, the living medium through which he expresses his musical thoughts. If we can find a perfect choirmaster, then we shall have a perfect choir.

I shall not, I hope, be considered too much of an idealist if I mention some qualities that the choirmaster should possess. We cannot get the ideal in this world, but that is no reason why we should not think of it and wish for it and try for it. The higher we aim, the higher we shall attain.

The choirmaster should possess an enthusiastic love for his art, a full and firm conviction of its great importance, and implicit and steadfast faith in its object and mission.

He should have infinite patience, perseverance, tact and firmness; a kindly and attractive manner; courage to face difficulties, or even temporary failure.

The choirmaster will best do his work if he understands something of literature and poetry, and has learnt to value words for their own sake; to appreciate the subtle differences in sound and sense so dear to the scholar; to regard them as things of beauty, value and interest in themselves.

A knowledge of voice-production is essential to the successful choirmaster. He need not be a solo singer, but he ought to know what it is that makes a successful soloist, and to be able to produce perfectly correct tone with his own voice.

A knowledge of the underlying principles which guide the singer in the rendering of vocal music is further essential, and of what the voice is capable as a declamatory medium.

The choirmaster should be a disciplinarian and an organizer; then I think he will be all that can be desired.

There are some good choirmasters, and there are doubtless many more who would become good ones if they knew how, and if they determined to develop themselves. Some are without doubt deterred by the consideration that there is little reward for the choirmaster in a worldly sense. This is certainly true; but the reward lies in the work itself, and looked at in this way it is by no means small. There can be no more beautiful art work than the singing of a good choir, and the joy and rest and peace that it can bring to many a weary heart are, to those who look below the surface of things, of more value than fame and riches and praise.

CHAPTER III

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BOYS

In the management of a male voice choir there are two elements to be considered, the boys and the men. The management of the first is of the most importance to the majority of choirmasters, as being the most difficult in which to attain success.

There are two ways of managing boys, by force and by persuasion — by driving and by leading. It is quite possible to get good musical results with the former, but the cost is too great — the cost of making boys dislike the work, and perhaps in consequence ultimately dislike the Church and all that it stands for. It is hoped that no reader of these pages will adopt the method of force. A word of warning is by no means superfluous, as it is a method that has been, and is, used in many directions. Mr. J. Spencer Curwen, in his book on 'The Boy's Voice,' tells a story of a Cathedral organist who said quite seriously, "I cannot tell you why that boy does not sing in tune; I have boxed his ears."

Boys will sing well if they want to, provided always that they know how; and the best results will surely be obtained when the work is done from love and not from fear of the consequences of failure. But, having said this, it must not be supposed that there should be any lack of firmness. Strict discipline is of the greatest importance, and must always be maintained. What has been said refers to the way in which it is to be secured, the foundation upon which it is to be based. A good motto for the management of boys, as of other people, is: "suaviter in modo, fortiter in re." The manner should always be kind, gentle, persuasive: the matter should be firm, decided and unflinching for what is right.

No persons have a stronger sense of justice than boys. Let the choirmaster treat all alike, with absolute impartiality, and be prepared to give a fair reason for all that he does; so will he gain the boys' respect and trust. He should never go back upon his word, but make it clear that he can always be relied upon to carry out what he promises.

Politeness and a considerate manner are important in the management of choristers, and will always be greatly valued. Neglect of this point often causes failure in choir discipline. Boys watch and imitate the bearing of the choirmaster far more than is sometimes supposed, and if he takes care to treat them invariably as responsible beings, entitled to respect, he will reap an ample reward.

An important principle may help to guide the choirmaster, viz., that in general people tend to do and feel and be what they know is expected of them. Therefore, let the choirmaster show the boys that he always trusts them. This applies to such matters as telling the truth. I have often told boys that it is better to undergo any punishment than to do so mean and unmanly a thing as to tell a lie; and that he who does this loses far more in self-respect than the one who is justly punished. I have told them that I always believe their word, that I would not wrong them by doubting it, that I would rather run the risk of

being deceived than believe that they were capable of trying to deceive me; but that, once deceived, I could never trust them again.

In the details of the management of a choir it is a great help not only to have the hearty agreement and coöperation of the boys, but even to go further and, as far as possible, let them assist in the management. I do not mean that the choirmaster is to hand over his rights to the boys, but that he may with advantage place trust in them when he sees that they are worthy of it, and show himself willing to take their advice whenever they are capable of offering it.

The government of the choir should be a Constitutional Monarchy. This plan has been tried by the present writer with success. It has acted somewhat as follows: He has laid down the general lines as to the conduct of the choir, and as to what his aims and ideals were; he has then offered to receive counsel and suggestions from the senior boys. When the suggestions have been wise and right he has adopted them, when they have been unsuitable he has explained the reasons for not adopting them. Any choirmaster trying this plan will probably be surprised to find what good ideas many boys have as to discipline and organization. The sense of responsibility brings out all that is best in them in this direction; and, when they feel that they have some voice in the management of the choir, their attitude towards it becomes totally different from what is sometimes found. They take a pride in all that it does, they look upon it as their own, they learn to love their work for its own sake, it becomes one of the objects of their lives, they do it to the best of their ability; and when the time comes for them to relinquish it, they do so with regret, and think of it afterwards with affectionate remembrance.

Responsibility in the control of the choir may be shared by the choirmaster among the senior boys. There are various plans upon which this may be arranged; the idea being that, according to the age and importance of a boy, so his responsibility increases. The details will depend

upon the size and character of the choir. As a practical illustration it may be helpful here to give some rules drawn up by the present writer with the help and advice of a committee of senior boys at Southwark Cathedral. There there were some fifty boys to be controlled; in places where there is a smaller number, and perhaps less high-spirited individuals, a less elaborate plan would suffice.

Southwark Cathedral

MONITORS

The boys occupying the Head Places in the Choir are eligible for election as Monitors.

Boys occupying the end seats are eligible for election as Assistant Monitors.

When a new boy is appointed to one of the end places, he may be elected as monitor or assistant monitor by the other members.

The duty of the Monitors is to maintain the behaviour of the Choir in a high state of efficiency.

The duties of the Assistant Monitors are to assist and report to the Monitors.

RULES OF THE CHOIR

I. All boys must kneel up straight in the service. No deviation from this is permitted.

II. Each boy must sing every note of his part throughout the service.

III. No boy may stare down the church during the service, or at the communicants.

IV. When changing the attitude (kneeling, standing, sitting), all boys must move at the same time.

V. No boy (monitors and the book boys excepted) shall take off his cassock and surplice until ordered to do so by the person in charge.

VI. No boy may talk, unless he is spoken to by the person in charge, while he is in church.

In this imperfect world there will always be black sheep in every flock, and so the writer here feels reluctantly compelled to say a word as to punishments. They are sometimes a necessary evil, but they should be resorted to as seldom as possible, and only when other methods fail.

Punishments will be required for delinquencies of three kinds: (1) failure in attendance, or unpunctuality, (2) mistakes in singing, (3) misconduct.

With regard to the first, a simple rule should be in force and always adhered to. A fixed fine should be inflicted for absence; a smaller one for unpunctuality. When a satisfactory explanation is received for either, the fine should be remitted, otherwise it should be rigidly enforced. An explanation in writing from a parent should be required in the case of a junior boy, for seniors a personal explanation will generally suffice. This penalty has been placed under the head of punishments, but it should be regarded as only technically such, and its operation averted as often as possible.

A penalty for mistakes in singing is often of great advantage to every one concerned. Mistakes may occur (*a*) through insufficient preparation, (*b*) through weariness or ill health, (*c*) through accident, or (*d*) through carelessness. In the first case, the choirmaster ought to be fined. In the second, a free pardon may be granted. In the last two, a penalty should be inflicted; and here it is important to make the punishment a suitable one. It should be understood that when music has been adequately prepared it *must* be efficiently performed, and that the failure to take pains at the right moment will inevitably be followed by much more pains and trouble afterwards. A little firmness now and then in this way will save endless future trouble and disappointment. For mistakes in singing a suitable punishment is the writing of an imposition. This can be administered in quite a friendly and pleasant manner, and explained as being equivalent to a necessary medicine administered by a wise physician to cure a particular ailment. I have found that all resentment and rebellious feeling has been removed

by consulting the boys upon this point and letting them set their own impositions, or at any rate advise upon them; and then, in the case of a group of boys incurring the same penalty, having an understood rule that the senior one shall manage the affair, give round the set copies, see that they are done by a stated time, and collect them. Such sentences as the following, written 20, 50, or 100 times, have worked wonders:

"A chorister must sing in tune."
"The human voice must be correctly produced."
"A sharp is a sign to raise the pitch a semitone."
"Music must be sung with care and precision."
"A chorister must fulfil his duties to the best of his power;" etc., etc.

Sometimes it answers the purpose, while varying the monotony, to cause the actual passage where the mistake occurred to be written out a stated number of times; *e. g.*,

ten times.

Under the third heading, misconduct, come such matters as talking during the service, inattention, insubordination, and so forth.

I strongly dislike punishment for these offences, as there is always a tendency towards the feeling that severity is a sign of weakness on the part of the choirmaster. The more power he has, the less willing he should be to exert it. The good behaviour that is acquired by fear is worthless, when looked at from the highest standpoint. Sense of duty, reverence, *esprit de corps*, and unselfishness: these should be the underlying motives for good behaviour. Still, after saying this, occasions will sometimes arise when other motives must be temporarily appealed to. When this is the case, the punishment should be such as will be remembered and will not be required twice. Fines may be inflicted if necessary, but for misconduct the best remedy is suspension; and when there is a proper spirit among the choir this will

be a heavy trial indeed. The writer has very seldom had to resort to suspension, but, when he has, the boys have often come to him in tears and begged to have any punishment but this, and when their prayers were unavailing they have been followed up by those of one or both parents.

With such a spirit it will be readily believed that misconduct is a rare thing, and this brings in a final and important consideration. In all questions of discipline, let the choirmaster be sure to enlist and keep the support and co-operation of the parents. When the latter know that their assistance is welcomed, they will be always most glad to give it, and they will value highly the knowledge that their children have in the choirmaster not only a master, but a friend who has their best interests at heart. It is a good plan sometimes to make it known that the presence of a parent is occasionally permitted at a choir practice; the musical ones will gladly avail themselves of this privilege.

The question of fines has already been alluded to; this implies payment. It may be supposed that, after all that has been said as to *esprit de corps* and the motives for good work, the idea of payment will be discouraged. This is, however, by no means the case. In a very large number of churches the boys are paid, if ever so little, and it is hoped that this custom will be carried further and become universal. No reflection upon the loyalty and good will of the members is implied by payment; it is merely a recognition, often very welcome, of hard work and self-sacrifice.

If any argument were needed, it is sufficient to mention the saying that "the labourer is worthy of his hire"; for choir-members are indeed labourers when they do their work efficiently, though they may still be willing ones. For boys to study church music thoroughly, and to go through all the physical exercise that is essential to their successful rendering of it, is just as much hard work as learning Latin and the multiplication table; and the help and satisfaction they may derive from receiving a little pocket-money in return is no more introducing a wrong principle than is the payment of the clergy, organists, vergers, or any other work-

ers. It is the *motives* that matter; and they can be properly instilled just as well with payment as without it.

There are various systems of payment in use. One that I would strongly deprecate is that of giving a fixed sum for each attendance at a service or practice. If there is any tendency to a mercenary spirit, this is the system to foster it. The best plan is to give so much a week, or a month, for all the work; and for absence without permission to deduct, not the proportion that represents the time that has been missed, but a much larger sum, thus refusing to recognize that absence is permissible. A member, on joining a choir, ought to undertake to be present at all its meetings. If he cannot do this, it is better not to join at all. As has been said before, absence through illness or or other unavoidable cause should be condoned; but absence through slackness or a counter-attraction should never be countenanced, and should be met by a prohibitory fine.

It will be useful to describe a method which the writer has found to work with the best results in a district where the boys have all been drawn from the artisan class.

1. Every boy received 1/0 a month as pocket-money.
2. Absence from an ordinary practice involved a fine of 2*d*; unpunctuality, 1*d* (these were remitted on receipt of a *valid* excuse).
3. Absence from the full practice involved a fine of 6*d*; unpunctuality, 3*d* (these were never remitted, except in case of illness).
4. Absence from a Sunday service involved a fine of 1/0 (this was never remitted, except in case of illness).
5. In addition to the pocket-money, a further sum was placed to the credit of each boy monthly, and allowed to accumulate from the time he entered the choir until his leaving, when the whole was handed to him. This amount varied, according to age, ability and conduct, from 1/0 to 10/0.*

* This was in London, and for a very large amount of work. With a smaller organization in the country the writer found 5/0 sufficient for the highest payment.

The amount of reserved pay was written on a paper and placed in a frame in a conspicuous part of the choir room, where it might at any time be referred to. The sum placed to the credit of each boy each month was shown; at the end of the year the total was reckoned up and a fresh start made. This is how the 'board' appeared:

Southwark Cathedral

Amounts to be given to choristers on leaving the choir, in accordance with conditions of agreement.

Name														
Name														
Name														
Name														
Name														
Name														
Name														
Name														
Name														
Name														
	Brought forward from 19–	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total

Fines were deducted from the pocket-money, which they seldom exceeded; if they did, the further sum was taken from the reserved money.

The object of the system of reserved pay was to ensure that no boy would ever contemplate leaving the choir to go to another where perhaps the money to be received was more and the work less. This might otherwise have happened in occasional cases, and the boys might perhaps be excused for it, but the unfairness to the choirmaster would have been manifest.

Another reason for the system was to secure the continued attendance of boys after they had left school and gone 'to work.' Boys who have left school have a tendency to consider themselves superior beings to those who are still there, and they may go further and consider themselves too old to associate with their former companions in the choir. It is just at this period, from 14 onwards, that their voices are necessary to the choirmaster; so, in his endeavours to refute the argument for leaving on account of seniority, his hands are strengthened by the little balance which may be waiting for the boy at the bank. A boy's voice, correctly produced, frequently continues serviceable until the age of 17, 18, or even later.

For knowledge and experience, ensuring accuracy and precision, these old boys are invaluable; one of them being worth half a dozen juniors.

CHAPTER IV

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BOYS (Continued)

At every stage in the choir routine it is an advantage to have things clearly stated in black and white. A form of application is useful. On page 16 is the one used for twelve years at Southwark Cathedral.

After the form was handed in, the particulars as to name, address and date of birth were copied into a book, and kept for future reference. This book was separate from the roll book in daily use, which contained spaces for entering the attendance of each boy and the money received at the end of each month.

On a probationer's promotion to the rank of chorister, a second form was produced for signature, in order that the system of deferred pay should be distinctly understood and accepted by the parents before being entered upon. This is an important point, and should not be overlooked. The form will be found on page 17.

Southwark Cathedral

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO THE CHOIR

To be presented to Dr. A. MADELEY RICHARDSON

*Name of Boy*_____

*Address*_____

_____

*Date of Birth*_____

*Recommended by*_____*Schoolmaster*

*and by**_____*Choirmaster*

I desire that my Son shall be admitted to the Choir of the Cathedral, and undertake that, if selected, he shall attend regularly and punctually.

_____*Parent*

* This is to be filled in if the applicant has been previously a member of another Choir.

MEMORANDUM

To Parents or Guardians of boys admitted into the

Choir of S. Saviour's Cathedral Church, Southwark

To encourage regular attendance a small sum (*3d* a week) is given to each boy as pocket-money, in addition to which a further sum (ranging from *1s* to *10s* a month) is put aside for the benefit of those boys who remain in the Choir *until their voices break.* Boys leaving the Choir before that time are not entitled to this money, except in the event of permanent illness.

Five practices a week are held for boys.

All must attend these, in addition to the two Services on Sundays.

Boys absent from practices without permission are fined *2d*, late *1d.*

All boys must attend on Sunday morning punctually at 10.10. Those arriving later are fined *1s.*

S. M. Taylor,
Precentor.

A. Madeley Richardson,
Director of the Choir.

*Name of boy*_____

I accept the above conditions.

*Signed*_____
Parent or Guardian.

Date_____

For the twelve boys who sang at the daily services the form was different, and the conditions more complicated. This was the form:

Southwark Cathedral

WIGAN CHANTERS

The twelve boys who sing at the Daily Evensong are called Wigan Chanters.

Their duties are to attend the Cathedral daily at 4.50 and sing at that service and to be present at practices when required.

In addition to the amounts given to the rest of the boys of the Choir, the juniors receive a further sum of 1*s* a week as pocket-money, provided their attendance is regular and punctual and their conduct good.

SCHOLARSHIPS

To the senior boys between 14 and 17 years of age Maintenance Scholarships are given with a view to assisting their parents in continuing their education. Each Scholarship is given so long as the holder's voice remains unbroken and on the distinct understanding that the boy attends an approved school during the continuance of the Scholarship. None are taken whose parents are unable to accept this condition.

The amounts of the Scholarships are as follows:—

When 14 years of age £10
" 15 " " £15
" 16 " " £20
} in quarterly payments.

In addition to the above a Bonus of £5 is given to each boy on leaving, provided his voice has broken, or he has attained the age of 17 years, and his conduct and attendance have been satisfactory.

No rule can be laid down as to the age at which a boy's voice will break — the usual period is between 15 and 16, but in exceptional cases a voice may continue useful until 17 or later.

To Alfred Madeley Richardson, Esquire, M.A., Mus. Doc., Organist & Choirmaster of Southwark Cathedral.

I, the undersigned, desire my son (or ward) . . . . . to be a candidate for the post of Wigan Chanter, I agree to the conditions stated above, and hereby make myself responsible for any breach thereof either by myself or him, and I undertake that, if appointed, I will make arrangements for him to remain at an approved school until his voice breaks, or until the age of 17, whichever shall first occur.

Dated this day of 19 .

*Signature*_____

Parent or Guardian.

*Address*_____

*Witness—Signature*_____

*Address*_____

With regard to the personnel of a choir, a first consideration is that of balance of voices. How many men shall we have? and how many boys?

A complete church choir consists in reality of two choirs, north and south sides, Cantoris and Decani. These latter words are not always understood. It may not be super-

fluous to remind the reader that they are the terms used in Cathedrals, Decani meaning the side upon which sits the Decanus (or Dean), Cantoris the side for the Cantor (or Precentor), who was, of course, originally the Choirmaster. The terms are meaningless when applied to parish churches, which possess neither a Dean nor a Precentor, but they are convenient names and should be preserved. It should be remembered that the Decani is always the south side, to the right of the altar looking up the church, on which side the incumbent of a parish church has his stall; and the Cantoris is the north side.

Whenever possible, each side should represent a complete choir, one capable of singing alone in a satisfactory manner.

As to size, the limit is bounded in one direction by the size of the chancel and the number of voices available. Speaking generally, the larger the choir the better. But, in the other direction, the smallest choir that can be considered complete would consist of one man to each part on each side — *i.e.*, two Altos, two Tenors, and two Basses — with boys in proportion.

In increasing the men a true balance should always be aimed at. In most places it is easy to find extra basses; tenors and altos are usually scarce. The bass part should be stronger than either the tenor or the alto; but not so much so as to lose the effect of proportion. It would be easy to lay down rules as to the exact number of voices, but results do not always depend so much upon numbers as upon the strength of individual voices. For instance, the writer once had a bass with a magnificent voice, who might very well have had three or four ordinary tenors singing against him and yet have maintained a balance. The general rule, therefore, that shall be laid down, is to have the number for each part approximately equal, with a slight preponderance of bass, always supposing that the voices are fairly equal in strength. When exceptional cases occur they must be met by a corresponding deviation from the rule.

As to the number of boys, it is still more difficult to lay

down an unvarying rule; so much will depend upon the age of the boys and the development of their voices. In most places only ordinary material can be obtained, and then the tendency should be to err on the side of having too many rather than too few boys.

When the boys are chosen from good material, their number should equal the total of all the other parts added together; when they are weak, the number should be increased, even so far as to twice the number of the men.

The question is frequently asked, At what age should a boy commence singing? The answer depends upon what he is required to do. When there is a separate probationers' class for the special training of undeveloped voices, it will not matter how young a lad is when he commences. As soon as a boy is able to read English he may commence to learn singing; this will probably be not much before seven years. On the other hand, many boys can be taken much older — as old as thirteen. A sharp boy, with plenty of practice and good teaching, will often become very useful though taken late. In this matter the choirmaster must use his own judgment and be guided greatly by experience. The experience of the present writer himself is that no boy, provided he loves the work and tries to get on, is ever useless, however little he may be naturally gifted or however late he commences.

The question of age-limit at starting leads to the question of age-limit at finishing. The subject of the breaking of the boy's voice is very curious and puzzling. There seem to be no rules to guide us; only endless exceptions. A boy's voice never breaks before thirteen and a half, but after that age it may go at any time, and in any way. Some voices break quite suddenly—in one day. I have known a boy sing his 'swan's song' at a given service, and never sing again. Others will give gradual warning, sometimes with many a false alarm. This breaking process may be extended for as long as two years. Some voices will lose the top notes first and gradually sink down, never actually 'breaking' at all; others, and these are commoner, will lose

the lower notes first, while the upper ones remain serviceable much longer.

The time of the breaking of the voice being so uncertain, it is essential for the well-being of a choir, and to keep its standard at a steady level, that the boys should be mixed as to age. The choirmaster will find it a help to make out a table of the Ages of Boys, separate and apart from his book of names, etc. This may be revised once a year, by adding and removing names.

This table should be kept always at hand for reference. It shows at a glance the strength of a choir, and indicates at any moment weakness as to age, which should be watched and remedied. It appears thus:

AGES OF BOYS

	Date of birth		
Name	2 Jan.	1898	16 in 1914
Name	6 Feb.	"	
Name	13 Jan.	1899	15 in 1914
Name	4 May	"	
Name	9 June	"	
Name	10 Mar.	1900	14 in 1914
Name	9 Sep.	"	
Name	3 June	1901	13 in 1914
		etc., etc.	

It is not easy to answer the question as to whether a boy ought to be allowed to sing while his voice is breaking, or whether it will endanger the quality of his future voice. Some eminent writers are strongly of opinion that at the first sign of breaking the boy should invariably stop singing. In theory this sounds reasonable enough; but in actual practice it does not seem such a simple matter to settle. Many cases may be pointed out where a boy has sung right through the breaking period without any ill effect.

The advice I would give is, that if a boy feels discomfort and strain when singing at this period he should stop, but that if he feels the use of his voice quite easy, then no

harm is being done and he may continue to sing. Nature should be the guide — who always shows her danger signal of pain or distress to warn us from taking liberties with the body. When she shows the white light, we need feel no alarm.

There are various methods of arranging the places of boys. Sometimes they are grouped in a regular diminishing succession from strong to weak. A better method is as follows:—Consider two points, the efficiency of each singer and his personal character. Then choose the two best boys for the head (*i.e.*, the extreme west) places on either side, north and south. The next two boys should be placed at the other end, the east; this being considered the place next in importance. After this the centre should be given to the strongest remaining boys, the weaker being placed in between, as nearly as possible keeping to the plan of alternating a weak and a strong all along the line. The places in the practice room should be the same as in the stalls, and all boys should be required invariably to keep in their own places.

For probationers' classes another plan is recommended. The senior and most efficient boy should stand at the head, the others following in order of efficiency. The places should be revised once a month, or once a week, the boys who show the greatest progress being promoted accordingly. When a vacancy occurs in the choir, it should be understood that the head probationer is entitled to it. It arouses interest and enthusiasm and gives satisfaction all around if the little boys themselves are allowed to vote as to who shall have first place. True, they will vote for the most popular member; but it will almost invariably be found that the most popular boy and the best chorister are one and the same person.

The question of soloists is sometimes a trouble to the parochial choirmaster. Occasionally an exceptional voice will appear, to which the solos will obviously be entrusted. But sometimes, while the average standard may be good, there are no exceptional voices worthy of being heard alone.

In such cases it is best to pick out a few of the likeliest boys — two, three, or more — and let them sing together. When carefully trained the effect will be quite satisfactory, and there will be the additional advantage of not feeling that everything depends upon one individual, who may be suddenly taken ill, or otherwise prevented from singing. The good effect of a number of boys singing together has been well illustrated at St. Paul's Cathedral, where at certain times all the boys combine to sing the solos. At Southwark Cathedral the writer has had the soprano parts of Graun's Passion, including the Recitatives, sung by five boys together, and has been asked afterwards for the name of the soloist.

Tenor voices are in many places scarce. This is sometimes due to faulty production; and occasionally an apparent baritone will be found who ought to be singing tenor.

The alto voice is, however, the one that gives most concern in the ordinary parish church. There may be such a thing as a 'natural' alto, but it is so scarce that the alternative plan of using boys for the alto part is sometimes advocated. I am not in favour of this; firstly, because boys with suitable voices are rarely found, and when they are they can always be used with advantage for the treble part; and, secondly, because the arrangements for training boys being so different from those for men, and the time required for them so much longer, the extra burden upon the choirmaster's shoulders caused by having two sets of boys to train will seriously retard his efforts in the direction of the treble part, which, if it is to be rendered with real efficiency, will need all his energies.

The alto, as ordinarily heard, is not a natural, but a made, voice — made by developing the upper (or head, or falsetto) register of a baritone voice at the expense of the lower notes. Many an ordinary chorus bass can be trained to sing alto, if he wishes. The price will of course be the detriment to the natural voice; but in the case of men who have no particular ambition in the direction of solo work,

this obstacle need not stand in the way. The choirmaster will be wise to look out for altos young, to train them from old boys who have ceased singing treble, and to start them as altos as soon as their voices have begun to settle down after the breaking period. We shall return to this subject in another chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MEN

Successfully to manage choirmen, unlimited tact is required on the part of the choirmaster. There is perhaps no class in the community so difficult to direct and yet at the same time with more claim to consideration and respect.

Whether a choirman is paid or voluntary, his work, if done well, is always arduous, nerve-trying and self-sacrificing; and these facts should be borne in mind when dealing with him.

No good choirmaster will want reminding that all men admire and will follow a man who knows his own mind, and shows himself decided for what he believes to be right and true, and yet is ever ready to show politeness and consideration to all, whether they agree with him or not.

It is important that the duties of the choirman be made quite clear from the outset, the rules of the choir distinctly stated and consistently adhered to. The discipline of the choir must be steadily maintained, and the men will work contentedly and happily when they know that they are being ruled, and by a wise ruler.

It is convenient to have a set form of application for Choirmen. The following is a copy of the form used by the present writer, in coöperation with the Precentor, at Southwark Cathedral for twelve years:

Southwark Cathedral

Application for Admission to the Choir, to be filled in and returned to Dr. A. MADELEY RICHARDSON

1. *Name in full*_____
2. *Age*_____
3. *Address*_____
4. *Occupation*_____
5. *Voice*_____
6. *Are you a regular Communicant of the Church of England?* _____
7. *Are you prepared to attend with unfailing regularity at:*
   (*a*) *Two Services every Sunday;*
   (*b*) *Two Practices during the week, on Mondays, at* 8.15, *and Fridays, at* 7.30?_____
8. *Can you meet the Precentor and the Director of the Choir*
   *at*_____
   *on*_____ *at*_____
9. *Please be prepared to sing one of the following Solos:*
   ALTO. — "O rest in the Lord." . . . . . *Mendelssohn*
   TENOR. — "Every valley." . . . . . *Handel*
   BASS. — "O God, have mercy." . . . . . *Mendelssohn*
10. *Please give two references:*

(*a*) *To a Clergyman*_____

(*b*) *To a Professional Musician*_____

In the direction of the choir, as with the boys, still more with the men, it is valuable to maintain what I have called a limited monarchy. With this in mind, the sympathy and coöperation of the members should be freely invited, which can be done when holding occasional business meetings. This will make it clear that the choir is not carried on to suit the pleasure of any particular person, but for the benefit of the Church in general and the congregation of its own church in particular, of which it may not be superfluous to suggest that the choir are members, and, in fact, leading members.

To maintain a spirit of friendliness and good-fellowship, occasional social meetings should be held. These will, of course, vary according to the circumstances of each choir, but they should never be neglected.

There is a more important subject. The choirmen should first and foremost be communicants, and this leads to the suggestion that great good will result from instituting Corporate Communions at stated times, monthly, or at any rate quarterly. Unless I am greatly mistaken, these will be highly valued by the choirmen, and will help more than anything else to make the choir a success in the highest and best sense of the word.

For many years a quarterly Corporate Communion for the choir was held at Southwark Cathedral, and each service was preceded by a devotional meeting on the Friday before. These services were much appreciated by the members of the late choir, and helped largely to foster the spirit of loyalty and devotion which enabled them to attain such reputation.

One of the difficulties that beset the choirmaster in dealing with the men is the apportionment of solo parts. Singers are sensitive, and naturally like their voices to be heard; but they are not always the best judges as to their own value as soloists. When the choirmaster leaves himself open to the allotment of solos at pleasure, disappointment and misunderstandings are sure to arise. The best plan is to have a definite rule. Whenever circumstances

permit, certain singers should be engaged and definitely appointed to take the solos. When these fail through ill health or other cause, the gap should be filled automatically. There should be a second soloist, and perhaps a third; then all misunderstanding and disappointment will be avoided.

Whenever possible, choirmen should be paid, for the same reasons as were given for the payment of boys. When a choir is well organized and thoroughly efficient, men will generally be glad to join. The payment should be regarded as a retaining fee, and a little compensation for the sacrifice sometimes entailed when a singer has put off another engagement in order to fill his place in the choir.

Choirmen value recognition in this way, and will always work better for it; and it enables the choirmaster to have a definite business arrangement with them, which greatly lightens his labour and smooths his path. It is astonishing how little they will be satisfied with. For instance, in the late choir of Southwark Cathedral the writer had several valued singers who gave their services for the sum of £5 a year, their attendances including two services every Sunday and two long and arduous practices each week.

When a small payment is made, an agreement can be signed with the singers, setting forth clearly the exact duties required of them. We print below, as a specimen, the agreement which the writer used at Southwark, under the authority of the Dean and Chapter, drawn up by the Precentor and himself, in consultation with the Chapter Clerk.

Memorandum of Agreement

made the day of One thousand Nine hundred and BETWEEN **Alfred Madeley Richardson** of Southwark in the County of Surrey Doctor of Music Organist and Choirmaster of the Cathedral Church of Saint Saviour in Southwark aforesaid (hereinafter called "the said Choirmaster") of the one part and of in the County of (hereinafter called "the said Choirman") of the other part.

WHEREBY IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:—

1. THAT the said Choirman will regularly and punctually attend and to the best of his skill and ability sing in the Choir of the Cathedral Church of Saint Saviour Southwark aforesaid (hereinafter called "the Cathedral") at two services on all Sundays at one service on Christmas Day on Good Friday and on Ascension Day respectively and at two practices in each week at such time or times and so far as regards the said practices at such place or places as the said Choirmaster shall appoint.

2. THAT the said Choirman will in the same manner attend and sing at all special services to be held in the Cathedral when the attendance of the full choir is required.

3. THAT the said Choirman shall be allowed if desired at least three weeks holiday either all together or at different periods of one week at a time as he may select convenient to the said Choirmaster.

4. THAT the said Choirman will to the best of his skill and ability with due punctuality and dispatch and at all times and in all respects duly and faithfully observe obey and perform all the lawful and reasonable requirements directions and commands of the said Choirmaster or other person for the time being in authority over the choir and in the same manner perform all such duties as shall be required of him in his capacity of Choirman.

5. THAT the said Choirman will at all times especially when within the Cathedral or its precincts demean himself with reverence (neither talking nor jesting nor leaning forward instead of kneeling on his knees during divine service) and in all respects uphold the dignity and sanctity of his office.

6. THAT the said Choirman shall not absent himself from any of the above-mentioned services or practices (except in case of his illness when he will produce a Medical Certificate to that effect) without the previous consent

in writing of the said Choirmaster or other person for the time being in authority over the choir.

7. THAT the said Choirmaster in consideration of the agreement on the part of the said Choirman will pay or cause to be paid to the said Choirman a salary of pounds per annum by quarterly payments to be computed from the date of these presents, and also for each attendance at a Special Service as hereinbefore mentioned a further sum of or if taking solos

8. THAT either of the said parties may determine the engagement hereby created and this agreement at any time on giving unto the other of them one calendar month's notice in writing for that purpose.

9. AND THAT in case of any misconduct on the part of the said Choirman or on the breach of any or either of the agreements or stipulations hereinbefore on his part contained the said engagement and this agreement shall at the option of the said Choirmaster and without notice thenceforth cease.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said Alfred Madeley Richardson and the said the parties to these presents have hereunto set their hand the day and year first above written.

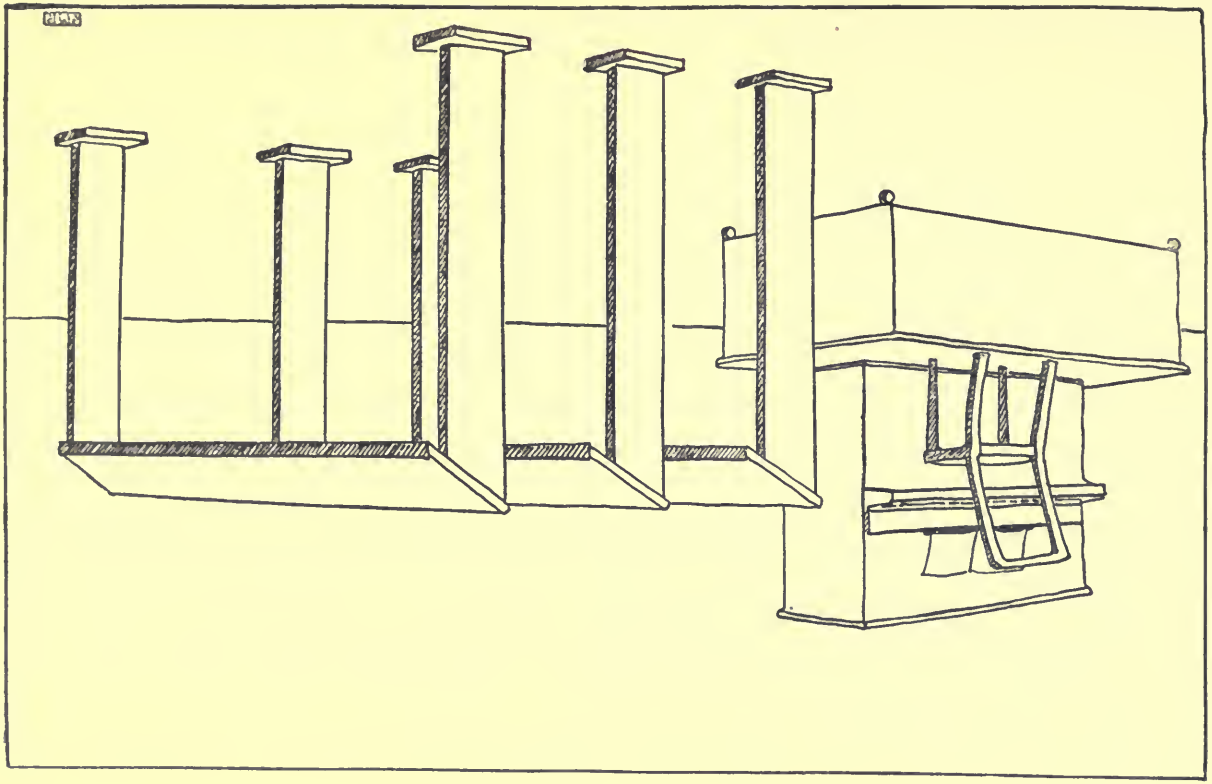
SIGNED by the said Alfred Madeley Richardson in the presence of

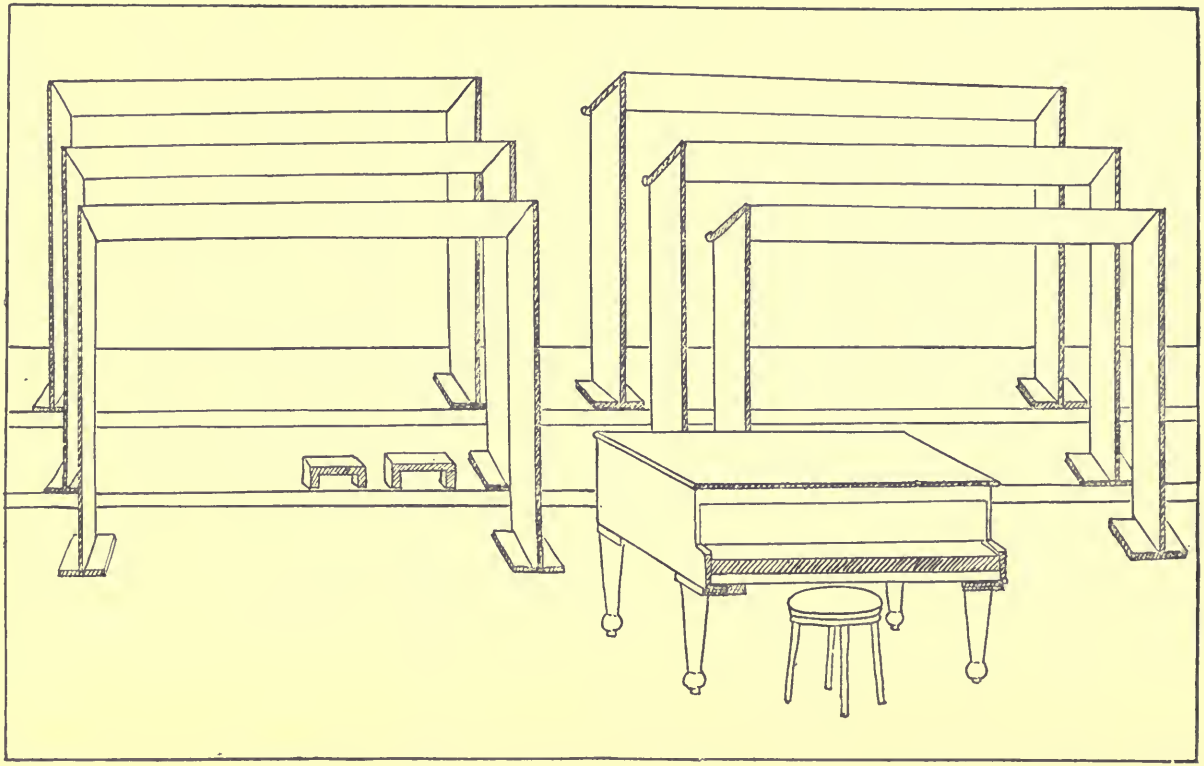
SIGNED by the said

in the presence of

ON behalf of the Dean and Chapter I consent to the above Agreement.

Precentor.





CHAPTER VI

WOMEN SINGERS

Occasionally in England, and very frequently in America, the upper parts are sung by women instead of boys. When this is the case, the choirmaster's task will be greatly lightened. It is necessary here to discuss the treatment of ladies as choir-members. The choirmaster will manage them, speaking generally, in the same way as the men, with, of course, the modifications implied by the rule *place aux dames.* In a mixed choir the alto problem will be solved by the taking of both treble and alto parts by women.

The innumerable practices necessary for the proper training of boys will give place to one, or (if possible) two, full practices a week, at which every member will be present.

The plan of having a regularly appointed soloist, and a second as a substitute, is still more important than in the case of men.

As to numbers, a good deal will still depend upon the strength of individual voices, but, as a general rule, the contralto part should be of the same strength as the tenor, the treble part slightly stronger.

The production of the female voice is the same as that of the boy. The tone is fuller, but, excepting in the case of highly trained singers, less flexible. General directions can be given to women as to voice-production during the course of an ordinary practice, bearing upon points which occur in the text of the service music. These they will gladly follow, and apply to their home practice.

If time permits, it is of great advantage to employ in the mixed choir Stainer's "Choral Society Vocalization" (Novello & Co.).

CHAPTER VII

THE PRACTICE ROOM

Wherever possible, there should be a place set apart for the use of the choir. By a special room, properly furnished, choir work is greatly facilitated, and much is made practicable which would be out of the question if the practices were held in makeshift quarters.

The holding of ordinary practices in church is strongly to be deprecated, as much of the mechanical work necessary in voice-training is unsuitable for a sacred building. If a special room is unavailable, then a vestry or schoolroom should be utilized.

The room should be large, lofty and well ventilated, well lighted and quiet, so that the softest and most delicate sounds can be distinctly heard.

There are several ways in which it may be arranged. In any case, the places for the boys should correspond with those they occupy in church.

The boys should be divided into two sides, Decani and Cantoris; but it is desirable that they should all face the same way during the singing, so as to avoid all chance of watching one another and diverting attention from the work in hand. It should be possible for the choirmaster to see all faces at the same moment. For this, either the boys should stand on different levels, or the master should be raised above them.

Music-stands are a necessity, so that the singer's hands may be left free, the right hand beating time. Long stands may be used, capable of accomodating five or six boys each, the height being suitable for the tallest boys. The short ones can be supplied with wooden stools to stand upon, bringing the heads sufficiently high to see the music easily. Here are two plans for a practice room:

A small cottage pianoforte should be used, which can be easily moved about; not a harmonium.

When the choirmaster plays the pianoforte himself, it may be placed upon a wooden platform. When he has another person to play (the better plan), it may be on the ground, and he himself should be on the platform, sitting or standing.

Other furnishings for the choir room will be a large table, hat pegs, the frame in which the amount of payments can be seen (see p. 14), a notice board, the attendance-book and other books of reference, and corks. There will be more to say about these later. A large quantity should be kept, about ¾ inch long. They may be obtained for a small sum per gross from any cork-cutter's.

Facilities for the distribution and collection of music should be considered. When many books are required in succession, time may be saved either by their being placed on the music-stands before commencing work, or by their being arranged on a chair or stand at one end of each row. Then, when the time for change comes, the piece that is done with can be handed up in one direction to be received at the end of the row and placed upon a convenient table, while the next piece is being handed out from the other end. This small point is not unimportant, as much valuable time will be saved by careful arrangement.

CHAPTER VIII

PRACTICES AND REHEARSALS

There is no royal road to choir-singing any more than to other things. A first-rate trainer will produce a first-rate choir; but only if he has sufficient time in which to teach them.

Good singing involves steady and constant hard work, and those who are unable or unwilling to give this can

never hope for the best results. In no form of activity can efficiency be attained without regular application, but in none less than in singing. The one watchword should be 'hard work.' In reply to the question as to how many practices should be held it may be answered that the really satisfactory arrangement is to have one every day. If this is impossible the next best thing will be to hold five, or four, a week. There will be plenty to do, and only too little time to do it in. The object of a practice is not merely to prepare the music of the service — the actual learning of the notes can often be accomplished in a very short time — but the training of the voice as a musical instrument, the development of the muscles of the vocal organs, and of all the parts of the body used in the production of tone. These need constant exercise, just as much as other muscles require it for the running of a race or the playing of a game.

There are various kinds of practices. A good plan is to have certain ones at which the time is entirely given up to the study of voice-production. When the choir has a very large amount of music to prepare, and perhaps a daily service to sing, it is best to have a separate probationers' class for this, at which the subject can be fully gone into without any rush or hurrying. Where the demands are less exacting, all the boys may practise together, either taking voice-production alone on certain days, or else dividing the time at each practice, giving half to production, the other half to the church music.

Once a week a separate practice should be held for men alone, to learn all the technical details of their parts. They will require much less time than the boys; their voices will in most cases be already produced and formed, and what they will require to learn will be accuracy of notes, expression, and style.

The boys and men having been separately prepared, they should meet all together once a week for a 'full' rehearsal. This is best held in the stalls in church, in the same places as are occupied at the services. This will be

the occasion for putting on the final touches, for summing up what has been previously studied, and for drawing together the various voices into a finished work.

When holding practices for boys it is perhaps unnecessary to say that punctuality and order are of great importance. Promptness and precision are also points to remember. No moment of the time should ever be lost; as few words as possible spoken, and these always to the point. From start to finish the mind should be fixed upon the work in hand and never allowed to wander. Such details as the manner of entering and leaving the room should not be overlooked. Quiet and order should mark the first; the latter should be done upon a definite plan, the boys walking out in single file at the word of command, without noise or confusion.

When holding a very long rehearsal or practice it is well occasionally to allow the singers to sit, but in general the standing posture is preferable. Sometimes, when rehearsing in church, the parts of the service that have to be sung kneeling may be practised in that position; neglect of this often causes a bad rendering.

All kneeling should be with the back straight and the head erect.

Weariness and strain can be avoided by placing the hassock or kneeling-mat well under the body, so as to throw the centre of gravity forward.

CHAPTER IX

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN BOYS

The English boy is steady, quiet, plodding, reliable: the American boy is bright, vivacious, enquiring, emotional. Both make good material for choir work; their traits of character will come out in their singing, and can be used by the choirmaster with a special view to the results he is aiming at.

Before I came to America I was warned against the American boy. I was told that he had no singing-voice, that his tone was thin and poor, and his compass limited; that he was difficult to manage and unwilling to work; and in other ways he was libelled to me. I listened, and kept my own counsel. As I expected, all this proved to be pure invention. The American boy often sings very badly, to be sure, and he often behaves very badly; but in these cases the fault lies with the choirmaster rather than with the chorister. We hear loud cries for more choir schools, as if they were the one thing needful. The real need is, not for schools for choristers, but schools for choirmasters, to teach them to use the material they have at hand in every place, instead of seeking for something outside their own particular range.

Since coming to America I have been so frequently asked by friends on both sides of the water what I think of American boys, that I am sure the reader will pardon my relating some of my own experiences over here.

On arriving in Newport, R. I., I was requested to found a boy-choir. Several abortive attempts had previously been made, I was told; but I said I was quite willing to try again.

It was then announced that I was ready to receive applications. A large body of boys arrived on a certain day, and I selected the required number. Not one had what is commonly called a 'voice.' On their first attempting to sing, the noise they emitted would be difficult to describe on paper; but that did not matter. What was worse was their behaviour. At the beginning I could not hear myself speak, so great was the hubbub of conversation; and, as for manners, such were apparently unheard of.

Here then was the material, and I started to make out of it a choir. Many were the warnings I received from the Cassandras of the place. A leading local musician met me one day and something like the following conversation ensued:—

Leading Local Musician.—'Why, Dr. Richardson, I hear you are going to start a boys' choir. You are of

course a stranger here, so I ought to warn you that there are no boys to be had. You come from London, but things are different here.'

A.M.R.—'Oh, I am sorry to hear that; but I think I will try. One can but fail, you know.'

L.L.M.—'Well, I have warned you.'

A few weeks later the same person met me again.

L.L.M.—'So you have got some boys together. But, make no mistake, you will not be able to do anything with them. *I* know what Newport boys are.

A.M.R.—'Ah, but never mind, we must make the best of things. I am sorry to hear, however, that the prospect is so dark.'

L.L.M.—'Well, good luck to you.'

A month or so afterwards: —

L.L.M.—'So you are still going on with the boys, are you?'

A.M.R.—'Yes, indeed; and they are very enthusiastic, attending every day, and singing like birds.'

L.L.M.—'Oh! are they? but, you know, *that* will not last. Nothing ever goes on in Newport, and in any case boys will not attend every day.'

A.M.R.—'I am grateful for your kind imformation, but I hope things will not turn out quite so badly.'

In six months' time: —

L.L.M.—'I am truly astonished to hear, Dr. Richardson, that your boys are going on so well; how do you manage it?'

A.M.R.—'Why, there is no difficulty; they like it, and they come.'

L.L.M.—'What are you going to do for the summer?'

A.M.R.—'We shall go on just the same. We cannot stop when the best part of the season is upon us.'

L.L.M.—'You think the boys will attend during the summer! Now there you really *are* mistaken. Directly the holidays commence they will all drop off, and you will have no singers at all.'

A.M.R.—'How distressing that will be! Well, we must not despair, but go on trying.'

The end of all this was that the boys *did* attend all the time I was in Newport, summer and winter, regularly and punctually every day, with the exception of two weeks when they went into summer camp. Their behaviour improved so that in the end it was quite exemplary. Their enthusiasm and interest never wavered; and their singing before I left was as good, allowing for conditions, as anything I have ever had.

The American boy is more enterprising and more 'grown up' than the English boy; though less thoughtful and less thorough. We had some amusing experiences during the course of training. One day the subject of study was the hymn 'The Church's one foundation.' On reaching the words 'by heresies distressed,' Do they know (I wondered) what they are singing about? 'Now, what are heresies?' Hesitation followed; no one ventured to reply. 'Do you know?' said I. 'Oh, yes, I can tell you,' cries a bright little fellow, 'Why, Sir, ladies who inherit fortunes.'

As the summer congregation of Trinity Church, Newport, is mostly composed of millionaires, this answer seemed singularly happy.

The boys took a keen interest in the Church's Seasons. Shortly before Easter two were overheard while walking along the street in animated conversation. 'Say,' says No. 1, 'this is Holy Week.' 'You get along,' replies No. 2, 'it's Passion Week.' 'I tell yer it's Holy Week.' 'An' *I* tells yer it's Passion Week; an' if yer sez that agen *I'll lam yer in th' eye!*'

They were also inclined to become ardent ritualists. One Sunday morning the whole body of boys made an elaborate bow to the altar on entering the church. I was a little surprised; but thought, of course, that the Rector must have given instructions upon the subject. On enquiring afterwards, however, what was my surprise to find that the thing had been planned and carried out entirely on their own initiative, after consultation with a certain youth in the

parish who was supposed to be versed in the 'correct thing.'

On another occasion one of the boys who had been recently confirmed, asked for a confidential talk with me, and then requested me to arrange for the choristers to have special private prayers given to them for daily use.

I do not think that any of these things could have happened in England; I therefore relate them as incidents characteristic of the American boy.

The speed with which the Newport boys picked up ideas of correct voice-using, and the rendering of music, was astonishing; and, in every way, I found them, not more trouble, but easier to teach and manage than English boys. This was especially remarkable in the matter of chanting. When they commenced, they had not even heard that there was such a book as the Prayer Book, much less that there were Psalms and chanting; but I found that by simply telling them to pronounce the words as in speaking, fitting the tune on at the same time, there was little need for anything else to secure first-rate chanting. They appeared to take to it instinctively. It seemed to me that this was one more proof as to what is the natural, and therefore the correct, method of chanting: the method that is easiest. I am sure that it would have taken more pains to teach them the usual style of word-distortion. The real difficulty in teaching correct chanting lies in the necessity for eradicating old faults, not in inculcating anything new. We shall soon return to this subject.

PART II

VOICE-PRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I

METHODS OF VOICE-PRODUCTION

The student who pins his faith on the study of books upon voice-production will find many stumbling-blocks in his path. Of recent years numerous able and ingenious writers have attacked the subject, each seemingly quite sure that his own particular method is right, and each contradicting, partially or wholly, the theories of his rivals. Upon almost every point which calls for consideration it will be found that contradictory opinions are held by persons with claims for a hearing.

What conclusion is to be inferred from all this? Shall the reader turn away in despair and trust to his own natural instinct without any guide at all? or shall he pick out one guide and leave all others alone? There must surely be some absolute truth as regards voice-production, some secret which Nature might reveal if she chose, though at present she remains silent and calmly refuses to divulge it, just as she refuses to answer the question 'What is life?'

It would appear that in this matter truth is many-sided, that some of its sides have been seen by theorists separately, but that the whole, all the sides together, have not yet been beheld at one glance. None of the various systems of voice-production at present in use could have had any vogue if it had had no basis of truth to rest upon; and this is further shown by the fact that each has in individual cases produced good results. It will be well, then, not to condemn any or all systems because they do not seem to satisfy every requirement, but to try and glean something from each, to sift out the truth from the error, testing everything by the only true criterion, results. In no subject is the force of the saying that 'the tree is known by its fruits' more obvious. A system of voice-production which will give two results — beautiful tone to the hearer, and ease to the performer — that system is right.

It is suggested that the student should observe and study all methods of voice-production, accepting from each what experience proves to be right, and cautiously rejecting that which experience fails to justify. The longer the teacher lives, and the more he studies, the more he will see that his work and methods will, after all, be empirical, and that he must be ready to meet the endless variety of defects and requirements in the cases presented to him with an endless variety of remedies. Voices differ like faces; no two are exactly alike. Their beauties and their faults are equally varied, and their training will, within certain limits, require a corresponding variety and versatility.

One thing must be maintained — the great importance of voice-production to the choirtrainer. Some teachers, unsuccessful themselves, are in the habit of decrying it, on the ground that it is sufficient to let the 'natural' voice develop 'naturally,' and that anything further is an interference with nature. This sounds plausible enough; but it is an argument built upon the logical fallacy known as 'begging the question.' The whole object of the art of voice-producing *is* to follow nature; the faults it corrects are always those caused by a departure from the natural use. It is the wrongly produced voice that is unnatural, and wrong habits of voice-using are caused by the artificiality of our life, which permeates all our activities, and none more than voice-using in the sounds of speech and song.

Voice-production is the art of producing natural tone, which means beautiful, true, convincing sound; voice-training is the art of strengthening, developing and enlarging the scope of this sound. The two cannot be separated; they are always at work simultaneously, though they are, as a matter of fact, different things, or perhaps, more accurately, different aspects of one thing.

For the teaching of singing to children it is in the first place essential that the teacher shall be thoroughly master of his own voice. Without this no progress can be made. Long experience makes me most strongly emphasize this point, in consequence of the many instances that have come

under my notice of men working and toiling to gain what they will never gain without this one condition. If a man has not himself studied voice-production through the personal medium of his own voice, he will be wise to lose no time in supplying the deficiency by placing himself under the care of a first-rate master. It is not even sufficient for a choirmaster to have sung himself as a boy, for the change of the vocal organs at the time of 'breaking' necessitates to a certain extent fresh training. I have in mind the case of a man who had been a much admired solo boy, whose 'man's' voice, without fresh training, became intolerably nasal and throaty. He himself was unaware of this defect, considered that his past experience rendered further study superfluous, and consequently never succeeded in producing satisfactory results from boys whom he subsequently taught.

This leads to another point. Boys learn far more by example than precept. In this they differ in degree from adults. It makes their teaching of a different kind from that of their seniors; in some ways it makes it easier, in some it increases the difficulties. They will learn, firstly, from what they hear the teacher do, and, secondly, from listening to and imitating one another. They will take less pains than adults, but they will also be less self-conscious. They will be slower to learn, but they will retain more easily what they have once acquired.

The training of boys' voices will be carried on by slow, steady, gradual growth. It requires very patient and minute observation, and a willingness to wait for results until they ripen. The choirmaster's work resembles that of the gardener, who plants his seeds, gently bends each young shoot into the form it should take, and leaves the growth to nature. At the time when the boy's voice is being used for singing, the body is rapidly growing and developing. This causes interesting and surprising results with the voice. A slight improvement one day, a suggestion, a touch, will, rightly directed, rapidly bear fruit, sometimes beyond the expectation of the teacher.

And here arises another consideration. No boy need

be regarded as hopeless material. The small, feeble voice of the little lad of eight or nine will, if properly used, blossom out into the fine sonorous organ of the boy of thirteen or fourteen. All voices should receive equal attention, whether they appear promising or not; or perhaps it would be better to go further and say that the unpromising ones are those which should receive the most attention.

Now, what are the results sought for by the study of voice-production?

1. Clear, flexible, pleasant tone, throughout the whole compass of the voice.
2. The sounding of every vowel with equal ease throughout this range.
3. The ability to pass with perfect accuracy from one sound to another.
4. The pronunciation of all consonants with distinctness.

The voice that is capable of doing all this is a perfect voice. The object of the pages immediately following these will be to assist the reader in forming such a voice. When he is able to do this he will have gained the most beautiful and powerful musical instrument in the world.

CHAPTER II

TONE (I)

The foundation of all good tone is a correct

METHOD OF BREATHING.

Speaking generally, a good breather will be a good singer; conversely, a false breather can never be a good singer.

Various methods of breathing are advocated, and much confusion prevails as to what is right. The following directions will be found of value:

(1) Breathe through the mouth.

(2) Breathe as deeply as possible.
(3) Aim at keeping the maximum of breath in reserve, and using the minimum.
(4) Breathe silently.
(5) Keep the shoulders still.
(6) Inhale breath by consciously expanding the ribs, allowing the surrounding parts to remain perfectly easy.
(7) Exhale by drawing in the ribs.
(8) Keep the body in such a position that the spine is felt to be slightly curved inwards, while the head and shoulders are erect.

The reader is advised to avoid wordy discussions of rival methods of breathing, which only give rise to uncertainty in practice. The really important thing to aim at is the power to take in the greatest possible amount of air, and to retain it for the longest possible time.

With regard to (1), it has been shown that oral breathing was used by the old Italian school of singers, and this being the case it should suffice for us. The argument against it is that it may allow impurities of the air to enter the lungs, not to speak of chill. It has not been found in practice that this objection has as much weight as might be expected. The argument in favor of it is that the act of oral breathing opens out all the parts of the throat which require opening, and places them in the most favourable position for tone-production.

With regard to (2), the sensation felt should be that the air is penetrating into every part of the lungs, and that not a crevice is left which might have been utilized. The effort to achieve this is trying at first, but will become less and less so with practice, until in time all difficulty disappears. A good direction is to tell the pupil, each time he takes a breath, to try and take more than he has ever had before.

As to (3), a large quantity of breath held in reserve gives power and grip, and enables a high pressure to be exerted when required. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the less breath passed out through the mouth,

the better will be the tone. Half the bad tone heard is caused by the passage of superfluous breath.

No. 4 is very important. It is exceptional to meet with a silent breather; and yet it is an easy thing to become, and the result most desirable. The objection to the noisy inhalation so frequently heard is firstly, and obviously, that it is unpleasant and mars the beauty of singing; and secondly, less obviously, but most important, that the noise heard is caused by friction, implying effort and waste of power.

The direction of No. 5 is very necessary. The dropping shoulders during singing are the cause of much faulty tone. When this defect is noticed, the opposite plan should be tried of slightly raising the shoulders during singing and lowering them during inspiration.

Nos. 6 and 7 give in a few words the Italian method of breathing. The directions mean that the initial impulse should come from the parts mentioned; but that all the other parts concerned with inspiration should take their share, and work together for the common result.

No. 8 requires no explanation.

The breath having been taken, the next thing to consider will be

Attack.

Attack is the word used to denote the starting or 'striking' of the sound, the starting of the machinery that is set in motion at the moment of commencing to sing.

The importance of attack cannot be overstated. About this the poet might well have used the word "dimidium facti, qui coepit, habet" (a thing begun is half done). Upon this subject is it difficult to write with any effect, as it is emphatically a matter in which practical experience is the only sure guide.

A correctly attacked note is unmistakable when heard; incorrect attack is a fatal defect.

Correct attack is present when the emission of breath and the vibration of the vocal cords commence at one and the same instant. Attack and control of the breath are in

a sense one and the same; correct attack is correct control. The breath may be controlled without the emission of vocal tone at all; the voice cannot be sounded without control of the breath, either perfect or imperfect.

The point in the vocal organ where the breath is controlled may be realized by observing the sensation of whispering. If a vowel is whispered sharply, with the minimum expenditure of breath, a small explosion will be noticed in the throat. This should give a clear sound, resembling the tick of a watch. When it does not, there is a defect, which requires immediate attention. To secure perfect attack, this whispered sound should be made several times, and then the vocal tone started, the aim being to produce the effect of one sound only, the two actions being absolutely simultaneous. The resulting sensation will be that of a kind of grip. The singer will feel that he has taken hold of the note, instead of feeling that it is flying away from him.

All control of breath proceeds from one part, the part where the whispered sound is perceived. All power, beauty and expression in singing depend upon control. It is the gate through which alone the voice-user can pass to success.

The two matters, breathing and control, are interdependent. It is useless to acquire the power of breathing deeply and in a correct manner unless it is accompanied by the power of control. From failure to control the breath arise all the evils of faulty vocal tone — husky, nasal, throaty, weak and forced quality. When these appear, the master may always be sure that the real seat of the mischief is to be found at the breath controllers, and that each one of them may be cured by correct attack. Attack may be likened to the action of the pianoforte. The hammer strikes the wire, and at the moment of contact the wire commences to vibrate and a musical tone is the result. It could easily be shown that the stroke of the hammer separated from the vibration of the wire would cause a noise of a quite unmusical character, but that this is lost and merged into the musical sound when the two occur simultaneously. Incorrect attack of the vocal organs gives an effect similar to what would

be heard if the two sound-elements of the pianoforte were not simultaneous—*i. e.*, if the stroke of the hammer and the initial vibration of the wire followed one another at an appreciable interval.

CHAPTER III

TONE (II)

The quality of tone of all musical instruments depends upon what is known as

RESONANCE.

Without correct attack no resonance can be secured, but resonance itself is something outside and beyond attack. It may be stated that vocal tone, and indeed all musical tone, *is* resonance. This is a point upon which many voice-users and voice-trainers have only hazy notions, and yet it is one of supreme importance. There is here no space for its full discussion, but the reader is referred to any standard work on acoustics, *e. g.*, Helmholtz's "Sensations of Tone." The initial cause of musical tone is usually something quite small. In the human voice it is the vibration of the vocal cords, which, if it were possible to hear them alone, would however, give merely a faint buzzing sound. The proper tone of the voice, of which these vibrations are the primary cause, arises from sympathetic vibration of the surrounding parts, and this is called resonance.

Resonance is of two kinds, caused respectively by the vibration of a solid substance and by the vibration of confined air. The tone of all musical instruments depends on one or the other of these. With the violin the wooden body of the instrument gives the tone; in the flute the column of air enclosed within the tube. The human voice owes its tone to both these kinds of resonance, hence its

satisfying completeness as a musical instrument — it is the one perfect instrument.

Of recent years attempts have been made to supersede the old-fashioned names of 'chest' voice, 'head' voice, etc., on the ground that all musical sound can be traced ultimately to the vocal cords. But this is to overlook the great principle of resonance. The names in question are not only convenient as describing the sensations felt by the singer, but they are also scientifically accurate, as correctly locating the seat of the vocal tone.

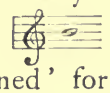
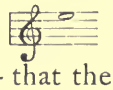
It may be asserted that in producing tone the whole of the body vibrates to a greater or less extent, and so far does this principle — that musical tone does not leave anything unaffected with which it comes in contact — extend, that it may further be asserted that the tone is even affected by the substance upon which the singer stands, and the size and shape of the place which surrounds him.

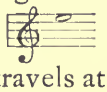
The main parts concerned in vocal resonance are, however, the chest, the head, and the cavities of the mouth. The first and second give what we may call 'solid' resonance; the third, 'liquid.' It is a remarkable fact that the higher we ascend in the scale, the higher is the seat of resonance. For the low notes it rests in the chest, for the middle notes in the mouth, for the high notes in the head.

Attack and resonance combined give perfect vocal tone. Resonance cannot be obtained without a true attack. The two, though considered separately, cannot in practice be parted. Some writers speak of 'placing' the voice; that means, securing the necessary resonance for each note.

The scientific explanation of the action of the vocal organs is very obscure, and it seems doubtful whether the matter will ever be clearly understood. But this need not disturb us, for all that is really required is that the thing shall be done, not that we must wholly understand the process of doing it.

Speaking empirically, the way to acquire 'chest' resonance is to feel that the larynx is in a low position, and that the seat of vibration is actually in contact with the chest-bones; so will a strong clear tone be obtained.

The way to secure middle resonance for the notes between  and  is to feel that the mouth-cavity is 'tuned' for it — that the opening at the lips is neither too large nor too small. An analogy for this is seen in the method of regulating a reed-pipe in the organ. The tuning to the pitch is effected by lengthening or shortening the tongue, but *resonance* is secured by regulating the covering of the pipe, which will increase or diminish the volume of tone in precisely the same way as is done in the human voice, by opening or closing the lips.

The head-notes from  upwards are obtained by remembering that sound travels at right angles to the vibrating substance; that the increased tension upon the vocal cords causes the larynx to become tilted; and that, therefore, to obtain the resonance right at the top of the skull the head should be drawn back.

This brings in the question of

BALANCE

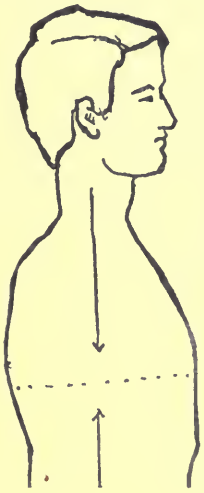
— the third consideration in this connection.

Attack and balance go together. Attack is concerned with the commencement of the tone; balance secures that what has been well begun shall be well continued. As a matter of fact, however, balance does not come *after* attack, but at the same point of time. A moment's consideration will show that all the force exerted by the outgoing breath upon the vocal cords is directed in an upward and outward line. This force is automatic. Directly the lungs are filled they endeavour to empty themselves, and exert pressure in an outward direction. Tone-vibration is caused by tension: the greater the tension, the more powerful the vibration. Tension arises from two opposing forces. In the present case, the one force is that exerted by the column of air passing outwards, the other that exerted by the muscles regulating its egress. The centre round which these two opposing forces meet is situated at the vocal cords. As soon as they approach closely the pressure from below will tend, not

only to make them vibrate, but also to push upwards all the surrounding parts. This is where balance comes in. Balance of forces is another name for what is known as equilibrium. In the vocal organs the action is to a great extent automatic. But — here is the important consideration for the voice-user — the action of the body is governed by the mind. Before any action takes place there must be the intention; concentration of right intention means success.

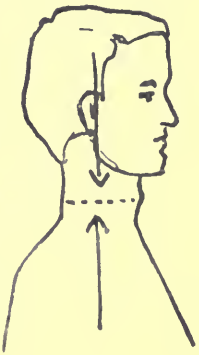
There will always be some sort of balance, but it may be true or false. True balance is present when the parts concerned remain in an easy and comfortable position, and no strain whatever is felt. All strain of the vocal organs, and consequent failure of voice, implies defective balance. Here, then, is the point. Of the two opposing forces in voice-using, we need not consider the outward pressure, for that is already automatically supplied. We must fix the mind upon the idea of counteracting it. The thinking of, and intending to do, this, will result in the ability to do it. All that is required is a clear vision of what is aimed at, then practice and perseverance until the mark is hit.

The following diagrams will help to make the meaning clear.



1. For the chest-notes, the sensation experienced should be that of carrying the centre of balance right down into the chest. The arrows show what may be called the line of thought.

2. For the middle notes, the sensation should be that a line is being drawn from the centre of the top of the head, and that it is being met by the opposing force from the top of the chest. The tone will be felt to centre itself somewhere about the roof of the mouth.



3. For the head-notes, the force appears to come from the back of the head, at an angle leaning to the front of the neck.

It is, of course, impossible to convey any adequate idea of all this by the written word. Personal experience is the one and only way to gain knowledge which will enable the teacher to be of any help to the learner. But this does not imply that practice on the part of the teacher renders theory unnecessary. The teacher, having acquired his personal skill, should strengthen it by all possible theoretical knowledge. In teaching he should, however, keep this in the background, never referring to or mentioning it unless obliged to. There is no advantage in the pupil's understanding the action of the vocal organs; indeed, such knowledge might be a positive drawback. The best singer is unconscious of his mechanism, just as a person in good health is unconscious of the fact that the body has any internal organs at all. The position of the voice-trainer is like that of the medical man. The latter knows, or should know, all that is to be known about the structure and the ailments of the body; but to explain this to his patient would do no good but rather harm, through nervous worry and self-consciousness.

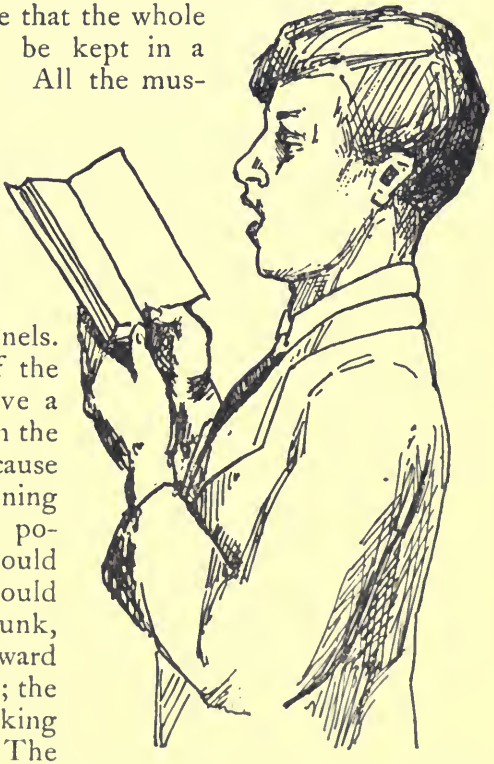
To go into the whole question of voice-production would fill this volume. I have only touched upon points which are absolutely essential and which are sometimes more than usually obscure. The reader should follow up the subject by a diligent study of any of the standard works.

CHAPTER IV

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS

Before proceeding to actual work, a few more general directions should be considered.

It is necessary to know what are the best positions for the body as a whole, and for the tongue, lips, and jaw in particular; the last three being the principal parts connected with voice-using which can be moved at will.



It is of importance that the whole of the body should be kept in a loose, easy condition. All the muscles should be at rest. There is only a certain amount of vital force available; all this should be directed upon the vocal organs themselves, none diverted into other channels. The mere holding of the hands tightly will have a detrimental effect upon the voice, as tending to cause a sympathetic tightening of other parts. The position of the body should be erect: the head should be exactly over the trunk, neither pushed forward nor strained backward; the poise level, as in looking straight in front. The shoulders should be thrown well back, to allow for a full expansion of the chest.

The above directions are very important, and should always be carefully observed.

With regard to the tongue, that 'unruly member,' it should be kept as much as possible out of the way. It should lie flat in the mouth, with the tip touching the front teeth. Some people find great difficulty in keeping the tongue in position; with others it gives little trouble. When a difficult case appears it should be trained into submission by a tongue exercise.

The following is generally effectual. Put the tongue out as far as possible, then gradually draw it back into the mouth, causing it to press against the lower teeth all the time. When the tip has reached the teeth, stop, and commence the action again. This exercise is not particularly elegant and is best practised in private, but it is very useful. While it is being done the aim should be to keep the back of the tongue down. This object can be assisted by deliberately recalling the sensation of yawning; which has the effect of opening out the whole passage of the throat, and, incidentally, of lowering the root of the tongue.

During the above actions great care should be taken that no stiffening appears. The parts should be *led* into position, not *driven*. Stiffening will entirely defeat the whole object of the process, and unless it can be avoided it is better to postpone the exercise.

With regard to the low position of the tongue, it will be seen later that this must be modified for certain vowels.

This fact does not, however, affect the general rule as to the low position, which holds good all through, only under varying conditions.

The position of the lips varies according to the vowel-sound, but a general direction that they should be kept apart is always helpful. Error is more common in the way of insufficient opening than the contrary.

It is important to watch the movements of the jaws. The lower one should be allowed, so to speak, to drop open; it should not be held open by force, but simply permitted to remain in that position, quiescent. Jaw stiffening is a

frequent cause of vocal failure, and should be constantly guarded against.

The compass of boys' voices may here be considered. This is usually very great in both directions. With properly produced voices notes can frequently be taken from

The highest notes are sometimes easily taken by a young boy who, as he grows older, will gradually lose them; the development of the middle notes taking away from the extremes.

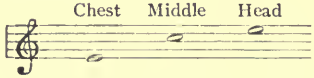
The voice throughout the whole compass should sound like one clear, even, continuous instrument. There should be no break or change heard anywhere. This brings in the question of registers—a question which has given much heartsearching to theorists, and caused widespread misunderstanding. Of course, there are such things as registers, but the voice-trainer's aim should be to cover them up, not to make them evident.

It might be supposed, by reading much that has been written upon the subject, that the voice divided itself into three (or more) parts, which should be distinctly and separately trained; and that a 'break' occurred at certain fixed points, which was more or less evident in different voices.

A better way is to think of the various registers as methods of resonance (which have been already described). There should be no 'break' at any point in the voice. The registers should shade off and merge into one another so that it becomes impossible to say when one commences and another ends.

The starting-point should be the middle of the voice with the middle resonance. This is sometimes termed 'mixed voice'—a name which is misleading. In a man's voice it centres round the note called middle *C*; for a soprano, round the third space in the treble clef. Above this

note, the resonance will gradually shade off into the 'head' quality: below, into the 'chest'; thus:



As will now be clear, the written notes of the diagram are to be taken only as approximate guides, not as fixed points. The trainer, then, will do well to keep the word 'register' to himself. What he requires from the learner is good tone, and this is best secured by putting aside all idea of breaks and divisions. The registers will settle themselves: they require no assistance.

CHAPTER V

VOWEL-QUALITY

One of its most striking features, which differentiates the human voice from all other instruments, is the power of varying every note by what is known as vowel-quality. Not only can every possible pitch be taken within the compass of the voice, but each note, when taken, can be changed in 'colour' in an endless number of ways.

We have seen that on securing full resonance by correct attack and balance, we have been able to produce a true note. The question then follows: To what vowel is it to be sung?

First, it must be seen what a vowel is, and how many vowels are in use.

'Vowel' is the name denoting the peculiar quality of sound given to the vocal tone by the position and shape of the cavities through which it passes. This quality can be varied by changing the positions of the tongue and lips.

The number of varieties in the English language is thirteen. These thirteen represent distinctly recognized qualities; each one is capable of further modification and variation.

The sound 'Ah' is called the normal vowel. It is produced by allowing the tongue to rest in its lowest position, and keeping the lips far apart.

Modifications of this sound are made in two directions: (1) By closing the lips, resulting in the confining of more air. (2) By raising the middle of the tongue, and thus confining less air. In the one direction the tone will become gradually rounder — which quality may be compared with that of the flute among instruments; in the other direction it will become thinner, and may be compared with reedy tone, like that of the oboe.

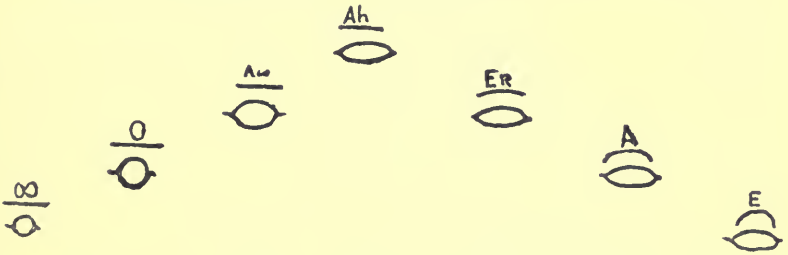
Starting from 'Ah' as a centre, by closing the lips we get these three new sounds:

Ah — Aw — O — OO.

Starting again from 'Ah,' and raising the tongue, the following sounds appear:

Ah — Er — A — E.

The whole series will then become



The above diagram shows the varying position of lips and tongue for the different vowels.

These are the long vowels. There are six others which in speech are always short, as follows:

o͝o	ŏ	ă	ŭ	ĕ	ĭ
(book)	(bond)	(bat)	(bud)	(bed)	(bit)

the words below are added to facilitate the identification of each sound.

All the foregoing are simple vowels. By combining two we acquire compound vowels, which are sometimes supposed by the uninitiated to represent new sounds.

Ah terminating with a touch of ĭ produces I (high).
Aw terminating with a touch of ĭ produces OI (boy).
Ah terminating with a touch of o͝o produces OU (thou).
OO preceded by a touch of ĭ produces U (you).

The compounds, and indeed all vowel-sounds, appear in our language with a great variety of spelling. With this we are not concerned; our subject is the sound.

To produce the best resonance for each vowel it is necessary to start with 'Ah.' Then try the three new sounds on the one side, and afterwards on the other, thus: — Ah — Aw — O — OO.

Here make sure that the best tone has been secured for Ah; then change it quietly to the other three in the order given. Aim at producing as little disturbance as possible. The lips will close: they will do that involuntarily. The tone can generally be improved by endeavouring to minimize the amount of closure.

'Aw' should be a fine, round, full sound, with a suggestion of grandeur about it.

'O' should be large and round. It is often too small, and, in the English language, it has a distinct attraction to 'oo,' frequently vanishing on the latter sound, and thus furnishing another compound vowel. This peculiarity does not occur in Italian; and in English it should be minimized as far as possible.

'OO' frequently causes trouble, especially for low notes. It ought to be opened out and sung with the teeth parted.

The other series, Ah — Er — A — E, will next be considered.

Again, the best tone for 'Ah' will be secured; this may then be changed to the other three, by allowing the tongue to rise gradually in the centre. Here the secret of good production is to take care that, though the middle of the tongue rises, the front and the back shall yet be kept down. Much of the difficulty with these vowels is caused by ignorance of this rule.

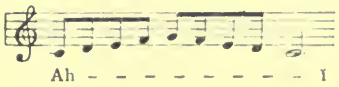
'Er' will give little trouble as a rule. The position will vary only slightly from 'Ah'; the tone should be broad and deep.

'A' is often very unsatisfactory. The tongue will require keeping as low as possible without losing the vowel, and should 'lean' in the direction of 'Er.' 'A' will often be pronounced as a compound vowel, thus: — A — ĭ, in a similar manner to 'O.' What was said of that vowel applies to this; the pure tone of the 'A' should be carefully preserved.

'E' often gives trouble, but it can be easily cured. The secret of producing a good 'E' is to keep the tip of the tongue very low. It should be curved down in the front far enough to reach the gums. The back of the throat should also be kept open and loose; the result will then be that this vowel, often sounding so far from satisfactory, will become one of the most pleasing.

The six short vowels are produced in a similar way to the long ones, and will give no further trouble. They are generally easier to produce than the latter, and, though properly all short sounds, are in singing frequently used for long notes.

The compound vowels need careful attention with the beginner. The point to remember is that all the tone of the musical note must be given to the accented part of the vowel; the unaccented part must be pronounced as briefly as possible. Neglect of this rule is common with untrained singers, and the consequence is a most disagreeable effect. However long the musical passage, and however many notes it contains, the rule is unvarying, *e. g.*, the vowel 'I,' sung to the following passage, will be rendered:



This compound vowel effect appears in another case, which should now be considered. The vowel 'ŭ' frequently terminates words in which it is represented by the letter 'r.'

The teacher should be quite clear as to the treatment of these cases. The sound in question is called the 'vocal r.' It may be used as a termination following any vowel. In our language it follows a limited number. Instances are 'hear,' 'fear,' 'dear,' 'poor,' 'oar,' 'hair,' 'hire,' 'your,' 'our.' The rule for the rendering of all such combinations is that the vocal 'r' should be sounded simply as a vowel when the word stands at the end of a sentence, or when it is followed by a word commencing with a consonant; when followed by another vowel, the 'roll' of the consonant 'r' should be supplied. Compare (1) (consonant following) 'dear heart'; (2) (vowel following) 'dear art!'

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSONANTS

In logical sequence of thought our next consideration will be the consonants; though for practical voice-training they will not be required until later.

Vowels and consonants together make words. It is necessary for the voice-trainer to have a complete knowledge of all speech-sounds, though much of this knowledge he will wisely keep in the background. Vowels, as already seen, are the musical sounds of the voice; consonants are noises.

The following definition is useful: Consonants are noises of a definite character, caused by complete or partial stoppage of outgoing breath, by the lips and by the tongue.

As will be seen, some consonants are less noisy and more musical than others; and there is a border-line near which it is hard to decide whether a sound is actually a vowel or a consonant. This will become clearer as we proceed.

The following consonants are produced by complete stoppage, resulting in an explosion; and they are called 'explosives.'

Stoppage at the lips . . . . 'P' and 'b'
Stoppage at the teeth . . . . 'T' and 'd'
Stoppage at the front of palate . 'CH' and 'j'
Stoppage at the middle of palate . (none)
Stoppage at the back of palate . 'K' and 'g' (hard)

The following are produced by partial stoppage, resulting in hissing, buzzing, etc.

Stoppage at the lips . . . . 'F' and 'v'
Stoppage at the teeth . . . . 'TH' and 'th' (soft)
Stoppage at the front of palate . 'S' and 'z'
Stoppage at the middle of palate . 'SH' and 'sh' (soft)
Stoppage at the back of palate . . ('CH,' as used in Scotch, Welsh, German, etc.)

The above are the true consonants — pure noises, as distinguished from semi-vocal sounds. It will be noted that they fall into pairs, a hard and a soft, just like the vowels with a long and a short.

The table given shows at a glance exactly what the consonants are, and how many have to be considered. They will be very easily remembered in this scientific order. In studying the pairs — hard and soft — it will be noticed that the difference lies in the point of time at which the subsequent vowel starts. With the soft consonants the vowel-sound starts earlier than with the hard, in fact the two, the vowel and the consonant, appear to coincide; with the hard consonants the one follows the other.

The next series of consonants is formed by sustaining vocal tone, but with the parts in such a position as to smother and cloud the vowel-quality.

There are the nasal sounds, with which the mouth is completely blocked up, and all escaping breath passes through the nose:

Stoppage at the lips . . . . . 'M'
Stoppage at the front of palate . 'N'
Stoppage at the back of palate . 'NG'

Then there is the oral sound of

'L'

for which the mouth is almost completely blocked up by the tongue; and with this may be classified the vibration or tremolo sound of

'R'

caused by rapid movement of the tongue, and analogous to the tremolo of certain instruments, or the 'roll' of the drum.

Finally, there are the two sounds of

'Y' and 'W'

which can hardly be called consonants at all, and yet would be improperly classified as vowels.

They are rendered by jerking out of the mouth the sound of 'E' and 'OO' for an instant of time, making the sound so short that it cannot be distinguished as a vowel at all.

Compare *ĭ—ard* and *yard*
Compare *oo—ord* and *ward*

One sound remains to be noticed, the aspirate

'H'

It is, properly speaking, neither a vowel nor a consonant, though for purposes of study it must be included among the consonants. It was more accurately classified in Greek as a 'hard breathing,' and so indicated in the spelling. It consists, of course, of an escape of breath preceding a vowel, passing right through the mouth uncontrolled by any part.

Study of the enunciation of consonants should be deferred until after good vowel-tone has been acquired; then it should be pursued with care and diligence.

Much otherwise good singing is spoilt by inattention to consonants, and the amount of error in this direction is quite distressing. Educated persons would be horrified at the thought of dropping an 'h,' but they will drop numbers of other consonants as a constant habit with perfect equanimity. This sort of thing should never be tolerated in church music, savouring as it does of carelessness and familiarity.

The correction of error in the English language is, however, a difficult and delicate thing; for the spelling differs so widely from the sound that it sometimes needs expert knowledge to decide what sound is required for a given word. For instance, many people will be in doubt as to the right pronunciation of 'sacrament,' 'righteous,' 'Pontius,' etc.; and every day educated people may be heard wrongly pronouncing these words.

The right plan to observe is, first, to ascertain the correct pronunciation of a word (*i.e.*, the received pronunciation as used by the majority of present-day educated people), and then to insist that every sound shall be carefully enunciated. When minutely watched, it will be found that many words are mispronounced by choirs as a habitual practice. For instance, in the General Confession, the very first sentence will frequently contain these mistakes :— *and* will become *an'; most* will become *mos'*; *merciful* will become *mercifu'*, and so on all through. Of this there will be more to say in another chapter.

To acquire good consonant pronunciation the explosives should be diligently practised. If they are properly attended to, the others will follow. The chief difficulty occurs when two of the same nature are sounded together; *e.g.*, 'not to,' 'and to.' The usual, and incorrect, rendering is to omit one of the pair. To obviate this error the explosives should be practised singly, then in groups, thus :

p – t — ch — k.
p, p — t, t — ch, ch — k, k.
p, p, p — t, t, t — ch, ch, ch — k, k, k.
p, p, p, p — t, t, t, t — ch, ch, ch, ch — k, k, k, k, etc.

It will, of course, be understood that the above letters are intended to represent the consonant *only* — not its name. Thus 'p' is sounded merely with an explosion of the lips and no vowel-sound — not as 'pee.'

Sometimes combinations of two, three, or more different consonants occur. In these cases every element should be

distinctly heard; *e.g.*, 'lost sheep.' Here we may analyze by trying 's,' 't,' 'sh,' separately, and then note the effect in combination.

The liquids 'L,' 'M,' 'N,' 'NG,' require care. It is possible to prolong them to any extent, but it is wrong. While perfectly distinct, they should be short.

The same remark applies to the sibilant, 'S.' The effect of prolongation here is still worse than with the liquids, but for this reason such a mistake is less likely to occur. Sound it quite shortly; and, in a chorus, take every care that all the singers do so at the same time.

The aspirate, giving so much unaccountable trouble to the uneducated, is the *bête noir* of the voice-user. A reference to the theory of attack (p. 48) will show why this is so. True attack precludes all idea of breath-escape; the sounding of the aspirate involves an escape; therefore, there is nothing so detrimental to the development of good tone. The Italian language contains no aspirates, and this is one reason why it is so well adapted for singing. This trouble of the aspirate should be understood by the teacher, though the learner need not know of it. In spite of the difficulty here pointed out, it is possible for the skilled voice-user to get good tone *with* the aspirate. This will be secured by developing the vowel-tone so firmly without the aspirate, that, on its introduction, any evil influence can be successfully resisted.

CHAPTER VII

FIRST STEPS FOR BOYS

In taking in hand a class of boys, the first thing to teach them is the production of pure tone; and for this purpose only vowel-sounds should, in the early stages, be practised.

The voice should be exercised regularly and systematically, in order to achieve its full possibilities, just as other

parts of the body are exercised to preserve health and strength. It is of no use for the teacher merely to show, though never so clearly, how the thing is to be done; it is necessary that he shall see it through, and that not occasionally, but repeatedly and constantly.

Some leading principles may well be called to mind here. One is the law of the foundation of habit. This comes within the great universal tendency of nature known as the Law of Inertia. Any motion once started in any direction will continue for ever unless stopped by some superior force; *i.e.*, *cæteris paribus*, nature, including human nature, elects to continue what it once begins. This applies to the motions of both the body and the mind. An action, whether mental or physical, is always easier the second time than the first; and the more frequently it is performed the less will be the effort required to do it.

The two old laws of Logic, seemingly so simple and obvious, in practice so seldom understood, will be helpful to the choirmaster:

1. Nothing happens without a cause.
2. The same cause always produces the same effect.

These mean that, in reality, there is no such thing as an accident. There is always a complete explanation for everything that happens, though we do not always know what it is — a very different matter.

It is the teacher's part to supply the cause; the effect will follow. And it is his part to believe that the right cause will always produce the right effect, though it may be unseen at first, and tarry long.

Another thought for the teacher is that by a law of nature nothing is ever wasted. Great results are always made up of a combination of small causes. This will lead him to take infinite pains, remembering that every action, and every word, will have *some* effect, for either good or evil; for nothing stands still. It will lead him to regard his work as an edifice that has to be built, but that can never be finished until each separate stone has been laid in its

own place. All that the teacher puts in will come back to him, in some form or another.

Now, as to the boys, they are light-hearted, volatile, and often indolent. They have to do hard work. How can they be induced to do it? Success will depend upon the method of teaching. The work should be made interesting and attractive; and this can be done by change and variety. To rivet the attention of little boys it is a great help to have no two practices exactly alike. They should never know what is coming next, but should always be on the alert. They should be allowed to help themselves, and to help one another.

It may be of assistance to describe my own method of work with little boys.

I make the practice-hour into a kind of orderly game, in which every boy has his own part to play. Each has an opportunity to sing alone, and the whole thing becomes a kind of continuous competition. As to the order of proceedings, I let the boys suggest what we shall have next, and they show in an amusing and interesting way what their views as to voice-training are. Certain boys have official titles. The best breathers are placed in the first row, and they are called the 'Champions.' There is always keen competition to enter their ranks, and this ensures that breathing shall be a first consideration. Then there are officials such as the 'Commander of the Corks' (who distributes and collects these implements before and after the practice), the 'Commander of the Tongues' (whose duty is to go along the rows and see whether all the tongues are properly arranged), the 'Commander of the Shoulders' (who sees that every one stands up straight), the 'Beating Master' (who keeps a vigilant eye to see that every right hand beats time). Then, if things seem to be getting a little dull, we have, by way of change, a competition between boys belonging to various schools. Another source of amusement is for all the boys wearing spectacles to sing together; or, again, to take the names in alphabetical order. These last are, without doubt, frivolous; but, if they keep

the boys cheerful and happy, the end is gained. The free criticism of one another's singing has excellent effect. A little friendly sarcasm from their companions keeps boys up to the mark far better than reproof from the teacher; and, once more, it makes them feel that the whole thing is their own — a most important point.

The answers to the question 'What is wrong with that?' when a small boy has sung alone, are often distinctly amusing. For instance — 'Please Sir, squeaky'; 'He's holding his head like a chicken'; 'He sounds like a fog-horn'; or 'He's got it through the nose.' These are exceptional. The regular answers are of course 'flat,' 'sharp,' 'husky,' 'throaty,' etc.

Various competitions are frequently held, and prizes given to 'the best breather' (*i.e.*, the head 'Champion'), 'the best stander' (referring to the position of the body), 'the best starter' (the one who has acquired the most correct attack), etc. The prizes are often contributed by the boys themselves, and consist of the usual articles dear to to the heart of a lad, such as pencils, penknives, etc. The prize winner is chosen by vote of the boys themselves, who make excellent and impartial critics upon the necessary points.

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST STEPS FOR BOYS (Continued)

Now for the production of pure vowel-tone, first of all in slow, separate notes, afterwards in rapid passages.

The first thing is the breathing. Here is

EXERCISE 1

Open the mouth wide, letting the chin hang loosely. Take breath deliberately and silently, through the mouth; filling every part of the lungs. Close the

mouth tightly, and drive the breath through the lips, only allowing it to pass very slowly.—Repeat the exercise six times.

This exercise has to be practised at home by each boy every day. To insure that it is done I have a paper form, with a space for every day to be filled in with the signature of a parent as a guarantee that the directions have been carried out. A form convenient for this purpose will be found on the opposite page.

The capacity of the lungs of each boy is tested with a spirometer on a certain day, and an entry made against his name. Three months later it is again tested, he having practised meanwhile the breathing-exercises above described. The one whose lung-capacity shows the greatest increase during the time receives a prize. The interest and emulation arising from this process have the most beneficial effect upon the singing.

Exercise 2

This is a breathing-exercise to be performed in public, with vocal tone.

The boys are all standing in a row before me, an assistant is at the pianoforte, and I am ready with the bâton. The following notes are then played:

I point to seven boys, one after the other; each boy starts singing the note that is being sounded when his turn comes, and continues it as long as possible. The seven go on together, and when exhausted, drop off one by one. The last survivor is regarded as the winner, and goes to the top of the class. The process then commences again, this time with the second boy, and continues until all have had a turn.

Southwark Cathedral

Each Boy is required to practise Breathing-Exercises, as directed, during the months of_____

_____The spaces after each date should be filled in with the Initials of a Parent, as a guarantee that the Exercises have been practised, and the paper must be shown to Dr. Richardson once a week. Any Boy failing to fulfil these Conditions will be fined

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I certify that the above is a correct record.

_____Parent

Name of Boy_____

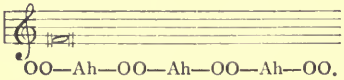
The great advantage of this exercise lies in the power gained of taking and retaining deep breaths. The method of breathing can be watched and easily guided. The important rule is to forbid the movement of the shoulders; little else need be mentioned with boys.

Exercise 3.—For Attack

A single note may be repeated seven times, thus:

This should be taken on rising semitones, as far as To gain correct attack, tell the boys to imitate the sound of the pianoforte, or, better still, the choirmaster's voice; or, when one boy becomes more proficient than others, his voice may serve as the model. The aim should be to hit the note 'right in the centre,' without any accompanying noise.

Exercise 4.—For Resonance



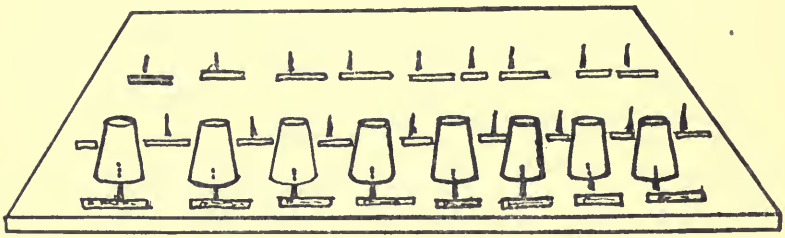
Repeat a semitone higher each time, as high as This, when properly used, is a most valuable exercise. The lips will be almost closed for 'OO,' and should be opened out wide for 'Ah,' thus:

Since the lips pass over the whole space, the best resonance position must be touched. The sound of 'OO' secures what is known as 'forward' tone, and attracts the 'Ah' sound (which is usually backward and dead) to itself. I feel it is due to my friend Sir George Martin to mention that it was through him that my attention was first called, some twenty years ago, to the value of the above study. However, an important warning is necessary. The great utility of this exercise has so struck some teachers that they have gone too far, and apparently pinned all their faith upon it. It is only a bridge. To establish a continuous 'OO' colouring for all vowels is an unpardonable error, and must be carefully avoided. The use of 'OO' in the above exercise should be regarded as a means to an end. As has been aptly said, it represents 'scaffolding,' which, while essential in the early stages of the building, must be discarded entirely before the edifice is ready to be seen and admired.

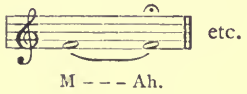
This last exercise, and many others, can with advantage be practised with the small cork (already referred to) placed between the teeth. It should be lightly held, without any pressure at all, and not used continuously, but as an occasional test of the teeth opening. Some teachers direct that the thumb shall be used for this purpose; but the cork has the advantage of leaving the hand and arm free, and achieves its object more easily and completely.

As already mentioned, corks of the requisite kind can be obtained from a cork-cutter's. The best quality are called 'homeopathic,' and are sold for a few pence per gross. If they are given to the boys out and out, they will certainly be lost. I found the best plan was to keep a special board, pierced with pins,

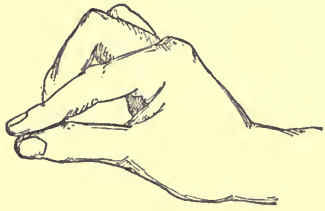
and labelled with names, upon which the corks could be placed when not in use, like this:



Exercise 5.—The Humming Exercise



Experience has shown that this is sometimes of great value for obtaining forward resonance. The 'M' checks the outgoing breath. When the lips are opened care should be taken to keep the stream of breath quite steady. In teaching a class the hum can be obtained by the simple expedient of directing the singer to watch the teacher's hand, and then giving the signals, thus:



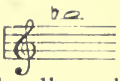
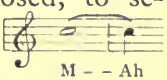
CHAPTER IX

AGILITY EXERCISES — SCALES

Musical phrases are largely composed of scale and arpeggio passages. The mechanical practising of these technical figures will therefore greatly help in the rendering of all music.

After the difficulty of producing a single note has been mastered, the next step will be to pass from one pitch to another with perfect precision, and without injury to the quality. Slow scales will first be practised, with careful attention to the quality of each note. Afterwards the pace will be increased until great rapidity is achieved.

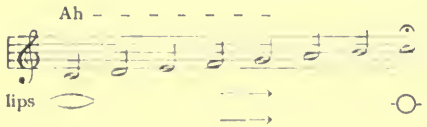
Exercise 6.—The Descending Scale

Repeat a semitone higher, until  is reached. This may be started at first with the lips closed, to secure correct tone for the top note, thus: — 

and afterwards with direct attack. The attention must be given to the two extreme notes; the higher should have middle resonance; the lower, chest-tone. The higher should be slightly rounded; the lower, opened wide.

As the exercise is transposed, these characteristics will change. For *E*, and above it, the head-voice will be employed at the top, the middle register at the bottom of the phrase.

Exercise 7.—The Ascending Scale



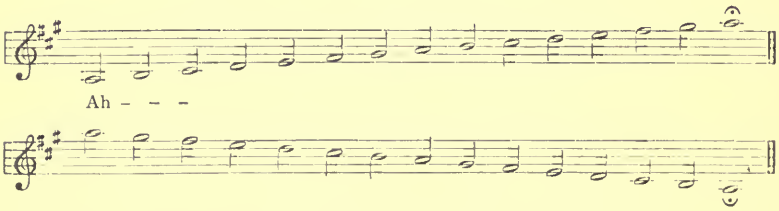
This should be practised slowly, with careful attention to the tone of each note. As the pitch rises the lips should be slightly closed, with what is known as a 'darkening' of the tone. If the tone sounds at all forced, the head should be lowered and the shoulders slightly raised during the ascent. The exercise should be repeated on every semitone to with variation of resonance as in the preceding.

Exercise 8.—The Same Scale Descending

Exercise 9.—The Nine-Note Scale

This should be commenced after certainty of production has been secured by the foregoing. The attention should be chiefly directed to the highest note; and if this is at first unsatisfactory it should be taken alone. The speed should be slow at the outset; afterwards gradually quickened. The aim should be to produce every note cleanly and with precision. The scale may be sung first *staccato* and afterwards *legato*.

Exercise 10.—The Fifteen-Note Scale



This should be sung in one breath — a very deep one — and slowly, with quiet, clear tone throughout.

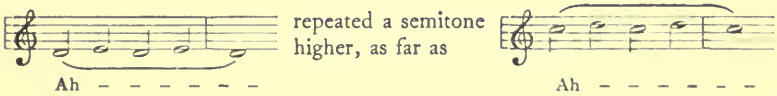
Exercise 11. — A Variation of the Preceding.

All boys prepare to sing this. While the pianist plays the scale slowly and softly, the teacher points with the bâton

to the boy who is to sing at any moment. It makes a valuable and at the same time an interesting and amusing exercise. The boys are all on the alert the whole time, with eyes fixed upon the bâton; unhesitating promptness, precision, and accuracy of pitch are secured.

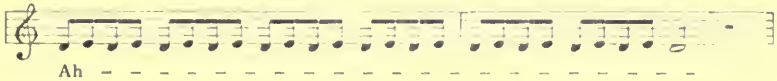
This is the order of entry: Suppose there are a dozen boys taking part, the teacher points to No. 1 for the first note, keeping the bâton still for the whole ascending scale. Then No. 2 will take the descending scale. Next, No. 3 may have four notes up; No. 4, the remainder of the scale. Then each boy in turn, starting from left to right, may have one note (Nos. 1, 2, 3, etc.); after this the start may be made from the other end (Nos. 12, 11, 10, etc.); and, lastly, the order may vary (*e.g.*, 1, 3, 12, 2, 8, 6, etc.). Then the pace may be increased, so long as the results are accurate. When any one fails, the pace should be reduced until more skill is acquired. I always found the above a most popular exercise, and it was constantly asked for.

EXERCISE 12



This is the preliminary to the shake. Attention should be given to neat joining and pure tone. The 'shape' of each note should be a clear cut square (□) joining immediately on to its neighbours, but quite distinct and free from 'smudginess.' Particular care should be taken with the upper note. The sensation should be opposite — as the pitch rises, the whole head should give the feeling of pressing down.

EXERCISE 13



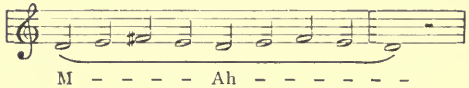
The shake itself. After Ex. 12 has been well practised, the same figure can be taken more frequently and more

rapidly, using seven beats with four notes to each. The speed should be increased as familiarity brings certainty.

Exercise 14

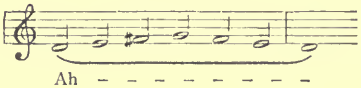
This advances a step further than Ex. 12. It should be rendered in the same manner.

Exercise 15



An extension of Ex. 14; a valuable study at any time. The alternation of humming and vowel-tone will secure resonance and control.

Exercise 16



An extension of Ex. 15.

Exercise 17

An extension of Ex. 16.

Exercise 18

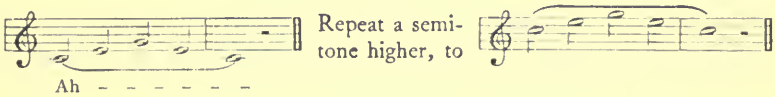
A valuable exercise. The 'M' should pass into the 'Ah' neatly, without any break of continuity.

CHAPTER X

AGILITY EXERCISES — ARPEGGIOS, ETC.

When the power of moving by step with correct tone has been gained, the training must be directed towards acquiring facility in moving by leaps. The obvious means to this end is the practising of arpeggios of common chords. They contain the intervals of the minor and major third and the perfect fourth; when these can be well sung, little will remain to be done.

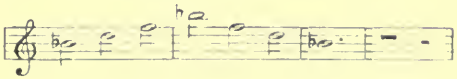
EXERCISE 19



Care must be taken that the quality of tone loses nothing by the rising pitch. As the pitch rises, the head must feel as if it were being lowered — as with the scales.

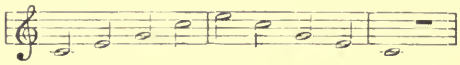
EXERCISE 20

Repeat a semitone higher, to



Here the two extreme notes should receive chief attention. The lower should be deep and full, vibrating in the chest; the upper should be prepared for by the 'M — Ah' before the whole passage is attempted. As the pitch ascends these directions will of course be modified.

EXERCISE 21



An extension of Ex. 20.

EXERCISE 22

A very valuable study. As before, special attention should be given to the extreme notes, and the pace should at first be rather slow.

EXERCISE 23

This consists of the preceding figure taken in a new way. Instead of singing it once only, let the boys now start all together, after taking a full breath; then go on repeating the figure as many times as possible without taking more breath. The one who continues the longest gains a prize. The pace will now be rather quick, and the notes sung lightly. It shows in a surprising way what the lungs of boys are capable of when developed. I have had a boy who was able to sing this figure thirty times with the same breath.

This exercise will be a very popular one, exciting great interest and amusement. It will be regarded as a real 'sporting' event. The result in lung-development will be invaluable.

The above arpeggio figures are sufficient for all practical purposes. If more variety is desired, the choirmaster can invent others for himself.

It will be convenient to include in this chapter double and triple scales. They are not things that should be attempted in the early stages of development, but may follow when single scales and arpeggios have established themselves.

Double and triple scales should be practised with a single voice to each part: they are excellent for acquiring the power of taking a lower part with accuracy and sustaining it without hesitation.

EXERCISE 24.—DOUBLE SCALE

To sing the above, two selected boys should prepare; then the choirmaster should point first to the one who is to sing the lower note, while it is played upon the pianoforte. As soon as he has commened to sing, the one for the upper part will follow. When the second voice starts, the figure should be regarded as having commenced; and the time should be beaten so as to keep both voices together, thus:

When this has been sung, the arrangement should be reversed: the boy who took the lower note will now take the upper. Very young juniors will be unable to keep the lower part at first, but they will soon pick it up by listening to others and trying to imitate them. With a whole row of boys, each can have his turn, with an opportunity of taking either part, thus:

$$\begin{matrix} 1\ 2\ 3 \\ 2\ 3\ 4 \end{matrix} \text{ etc.}$$

or they may be taken at random.

EXERCISE 25.—TRIPLE SCALE

This is an interesting and useful study. To take it accurately the singers will have to be fairly advanced; very young boys should not attempt it.

It should be commenced in the same manner as No. 24.

Here three boys will be selected, and each will have a chance of taking any note. The middle part will be the

most difficult, but all will soon master it with patience and perseverance. On the same plan as before, the order of voices may be:

1 2 3 3 2
2 3 1 2 1
3 1 2 1 3

Each boy must be prepared to sing any part when called upon. The scales may be transposed by semitones, rising as high as

---

This concludes the pure voice-production exercises. When they have all been sung to the vowel 'Ah' they may be taken to others. It should be possible to sing all of the given passages to any vowel with equal ease and certainty. After 'Ah,' the most important for practice is perhaps 'E' (see p. 61). Then 'O' may be studied. 'A' will always be troublesome.

The best way to conduct these exercises is for the choirmaster to know them all from memory, the pianist also being ready to play suitable accompaniments; then the teacher will 'pattern' with his own voice the one he intends to have sung. But to facilitate the use in the early stages, the whole are given in full on another page, with pianoforte accompaniment. (See p. 00.)

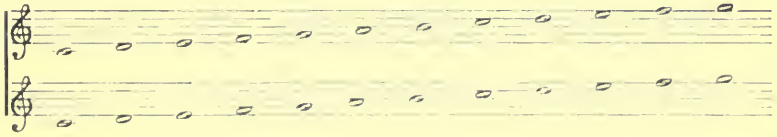
The voice-production exercises should never be regarded as finished. At every stage in his career every chorister should constantly practise them; so will he be certain to keep his voice in good order. It should be remembered that the singing of words has always a tendency to vitiate pure vocal tone. This tendency will be successfully counteracted by steady and conscientious practice of the exercises.

CHAPTER XI

USE OF THE BLACKBOARD

Though not actually essential, a blackboard ruled with music-lines will be found a convenient adjunct to the practice room. It is not necessary for the choirmaster to give much attention to the teaching of sight-reading as a separate study: the practice of the voice-production exercises and other things will so sharpen the wits, and exercise the muscles, of the boys that they will unconsciously acquire the power of sight-reading, without special attention. This is, of course, assuming that they have daily, or at any rate frequent, practices. With classes that meet only occasionally the case is different. Still, although the other aspects of the work are more important for church choirs, nothing but good can arise from occasional practice in sight-reading. And this can be introduced with the help of the blackboard.

The board being already ruled with music-lines, the notes of the scale should be written upon the lines, embracing the easy compass of the voice, thus :



This appears in the key of *C*, but any signature may be written at the commencement of the lines and then the tonic pointed to.

The teacher will now take the bâton and point to any note, which the boys will be required to sing to the vowel 'Ah'; the pitch being given by the pianoforte. From this start he will proceed to point to the notes of any tune he wishes to be sung — either one already known, or composed extempore by him on the spot. This method will cultivate

the power of reading intervals with accuracy and ease. The whole notes will, of course, be regarded simply as signs of pitch, not pace. For sight-reading in two parts two bâtons may be used, one in each hand. I myself have sometimes used three sticks, introducing three-part harmony, to the great satisfaction of the singers; but this is a more difficult operation, and cannot well be described in writing; nothing short of a personal interview would carry conviction.

There is further use for the blackboard. In order that the minds of the singers may be concentrated upon what they are doing, it is important to avoid superfluous talking. No singer should be allowed to speak; the choirmaster's words should be reduced to the fewest number possible. Many directions may then be written upon the blackboard. When they are to be followed, the teacher will quietly point to them with his stick, thus avoiding all necessity for speaking.

The seven long vowels may in this way be written in bold type. Then whichever one is to be used for an exercise can be indicated at the right moment.

The humming exercise can be introduced anywhere by simply pointing to the letter 'M.' Various other directions that are frequently needed can in the same way be indicated; *e.g.*, 'cork in', 'cork out,' 'deep breath,' 'stand up straight,' 'sit,' etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII

VOWELS AND CONSONANTS COMBINED

Headway having been made with vocal tone, constant and diligent attention should be given to the study of hymns. The hymn gives the choirmaster opportunities for illustrating, on a small and simple scale, all that goes to the making of an artistic interpretation of vocal music. There is no point of expression or style in the most difficult an-

them that does not find its counterpart in the simple hymn; and a choir able to give a really fine rendering of hymns may be trusted to do credit to itself in any other music.

In practising hymns the following details of vocal delivery are to be considered:

1. Purity of tone.
2. Maintenance of pitch.
3. Accuracy of time.
4. Vowel quality.
5. Consonants.
6. Phrasing.
7. Accent.
8. Expression.
9. Meaning of words.

The beauty and impressiveness of any vocal performance will depend upon the understanding and application of every one of these points. Blended together, they will form one complete and perfect whole, whose merit will be that of a plain, simple unity.

The choirmaster should attack one point at a time, while ever bearing all in mind. His object will be to lead the singers gradually, not observing all at all times, not with conscious effort, but as a matter of habit.

It will now be seen how advantageous it is to have some simple material upon which to work, in aiming at this high artistic standard; and nothing is better for the purpose than hymns. They give notes extending only over the easy compass of the voice; their words contain all the vocal elements that will be found in other music; and their simplicity allows all the attention to be directed to the vital points in vocal rendering, without distracting the mind by efforts to conquer purely musical difficulties.

When the habit has been acquired of instinctively attending to all these points of rendering — when it has become part of the singer's very nature — then he can turn to elaborate music with confidence; for he will be certain to give it an artistic interpretation, once its technical details have been mastered.

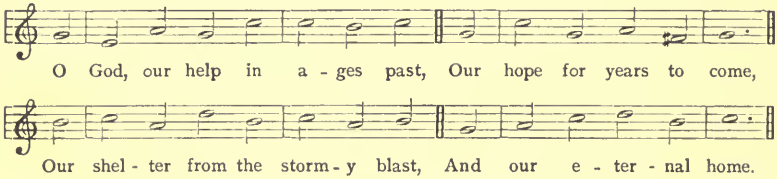
The practising of hymns may be made interesting to the junior boys by taking them in a great variety of ways. They may be sung:

1. All together;
2. By a single voice;
3. By two together;
4. By a whole row;
5. As a solo by the choirmaster, to be imitated; or
6. Single phrases,
7. Single words, or even
8. Single vowel or consonant sounds, may be studied.

When one voice is singing alone the others need not remain long idle, but may be instructed to join in at a given signal. If the verses are short, this may be for the last line; if long, for the second half; if they end with a refrain, that may be the point of entry.

A few well-known hymns will now be taken, as illustrations of a lesson.

Hymns A. & M. 165 (New American Hymnal 418).



'O God.' — Let the 'O' be taken with full round tone; it must not sound like 'er.' 'God' is a word that is seldom well pronounced by choirs: the vowel must be very round, the 'd' quite distinct.

'Our.' — Here the sound of 'ah' should be aimed at; the vowel-glide will take care of itself.

'Help.' — Care should be taken that the 'p' sounds as belonging to its own word, not the next.

'In.' — Here is the 'ĭ' sound: keep the tongue down in the front, bringing the tone well forward. The pitch is at a difficult part of the voice. Secure good 'middle' tone; if necessary, by first closing the lips.

'Ages.' — The second syllable should be carefully rendered, not sounded as 'iz.'

'Past.' — Secure the ring in the front of the mouth, and pronounce the consonants distinctly.

'Our hope.' — The round vowel of 'hope' must be guarded, and the 'p' sounded.

'For.' — Do not roll the 'r.'

'Years.' — This will probably be rendered incorrectly by beginners. The sound of 'e' must be continued quite to the end of the note, and it should be well produced with the tip of the tongue low down.

'To.' — Not 'too'; a light vowel-sound.

'Come.' — The full three beats should be given to the vowel, which should be well opened.

'Our shelter.' — 'Shel-' is difficult for beginners. Again secure resonance by the closed lips, and then open out the vowel.

'From.' — This takes the highest note in the tune. Try it separately if it goes badly; let the boys compete as to who will set the best pattern; then the winner may be imitated.

'The.' — A light vowel-sound: 'ŭ.'

'Stormy blast.' — Give a large round vowel for the first word; pronounce all the consonants in the second.

'And our eternal home.' — Take care that 'and' retains both its consonants. 'Eternal' commences with a long 'e': its second vowel should be well adjusted to the 't.' 'Home' should be well rounded, and sung for the full three beats.

It will be noted that this verse only forms an address: it terminates with a semicolon, and should be only slightly separated from the next. Passing rapidly over the other verses, notice the following points:

'Beneath' and 'before' should be pronounced with the first syllable short.

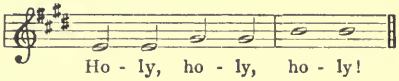
'Sure' should be sung with three beats to the sound of 'oo.' This is very seldom delivered correctly, and demands careful attention.

'Art God.' — Care should be taken to pronounce the final consonant in both words.

'As a dream.' — No break should be made here after 'dream'; the sense will be clear if breath is taken before 'as.'

The pace of the hymn should be moderate; the expression broad and dignified. The *legato* style should be aimed at all through.

160.



(For the rest of the text, see Hymn Book.)

In the first phrase commence with very soft tone, making a gradual *crescendo* to the third word. Pronounce the 'o' very roundly; the 'ly' lightly. Make a very slight break between each word.

'Lord God almighty.' — Make a *crescendo* right along here. The pronunciation of the 'd's' must be cared for; they are often omitted. The tone of the *C* sharp will perhaps give trouble. Care for it in the usual way.

'Early in the morning, etc.' — Beginners usually neglect the dot; make a special point of explaining its use here, and allow no inaccuracy. The tone of 'morning' should be watched; it ought to ring out with telling effect. The *E* will be a head-note, taken with the head held well back and down.

'Thee' has four beats. The note is seldom given its full value; this will form a good illustration of the importance of accuracy in time. Allow no excuses as to failure of breath to interfere with its due length.

'Holy, holy, holy.' — This will be taken in the same way as the first line. The dot at 'merciful' should be insisted upon.

'God in three persons, etc.' — This last line is the climax, and should be delivered with great emphasis. There is an unfortunate false accent upon 'in' instead of 'three'; this should be minimized by giving extra weight to the lat-

ter word. At the end of the line there should be a gradual *diminuendo*. Great care should be taken with the concluding words. 'Trinity' with its three repetitions of 'ĭ,' will repay close study; commonly, it is not well sung. The last note must be held for the full four beats. To insure this will require determined persistence on the part of the choirmaster. The composer has, with pathetic suggestion, placed a pause over it. This is quite unnecessary. What is required is the full length of the breve, and I do not suppose he really desired any more.

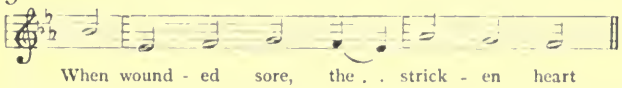
The following points will require attention in the remaining verses:

'Which wert, etc.' — A break at each comma is necessary here to bring out the full force of the solemn statement. It must be remembered that not all commas require a break. Stops are only a help (often an imperfect and fallible one) to the rendering; it is the sense that must guide.

'Perfect in power, etc.' — Here untrained singers will desire to make a break after the word 'in,' instead of after 'love.' They will require patient persistence to guide them aright.

The pace of the whole hymn should not be slow. It is so long that a slow tempo gives a wearisome effect. The movement should, however, be extremely smooth and connected, and all accent shunned except that required by the words. It will then be seen that, though the pace as judged by a metronome may be quick, the effect will not be that of hurry. It is the repetition of strong accents that gives the mental impression of speed; smoothness of rendering produces a feeling of calm, even though the actual pace be rapid.

183.



This beautiful hymn will give scope for the introduction of tender and earnest expression. It should be solemn and sustained, with every point of phrasing observed.

'When wounded sore, etc.' — No break should be made at the end of the first line. Render the quarter-notes carefully; when two are substituted for a half-note, each should be regarded as of slightly more value than half a half-note. The teacher who applies this rule will reap from it a harvest of results. Dwell slightly on each of the notes, giving a little more time to the first than to the second.

'One only hand, etc.' Render thus:

'One only hand — a piercèd hand.'

Make a slight break at —. Make a decided lengthening upon 'ōn-,' with powerful tone. The solemn reference in the second phrase is indicated by the break after 'hand.' This phrase should be taken very quietly. After it there should be no break, but the motion should continue to the end of the verse.

In the remaining verses the same points will be noticed; and with what has been already indicated the choirmaster will be able to render them with good effect. The false accent in the third verse on 'over' may be corrected by giving an extra verbal accent to the syllable requiring it.

In this chapter it had been intended to introduce the hymn only as a voice-production exercise, but it seemed impossible to use it at all without attending to other points, which, if neglected, would take from voice-production most of its value. Much that in logical sequence should have come in Part III has, therefore, been anticipated.

In spite of this the reader may still regard the hymn as most valuable material for the study of voice-production, as an end in itself. He will use his own judgment as to when to bring in other matters, and how much of them, in the early stages of training. All possibilities of artistic rendering will be in his own mind; but he will not constantly refer to them. A touch here, a point gained there, will lead to steady and real progress — progress that never looks back; that never requires to, for it makes sure of every inch of ground as it moves on, and, building upon sure foundations, raises its edifice with a firmness and solidity that cannot be shaken.

Altos of Trinity Church, Newport, R. I.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAINING OF ALTOS

In proportion to the well-known dearth of male alto singers is the desire for information as to the correct method of training them.

The writer's recent experience at Newport, R. I., was of so unusual and so interesting a character that he will make no apology for here describing it. He undertook to found a choir of men and boys. The boys were soon secured; tenors and basses were discovered; but of altos there were none to be obtained on any terms — in fact, such a thing as a male adult alto had never been heard of in the place.

The writer discarded the suggestion to allow treble boys to sing the alto part, for reasons already given in these pages; and he determined to try the experiment of 'making' some adult altos out of nothing. He then secured six enthusiastic youths of 16 and 17 years of age, whose voices had 'broken'; very desirable from every point of view but the musical. They gladly placed themselves in his hands, and he made agreements with them that, in return for his promise to give them voices, they would undertake to sing for the Church for not less than five years. Then the work commenced.

Three separate practices of forty-five minutes each were arranged during the week, and the altos were also allowed to attend the full rehearsal. It was found, when they attempted to sing, that they were innocent of the possibility of producing a single note correctly. This, however, did not matter; they stood up and breathed. Then they tried to hum a note struck on the pianoforte, following the choirmaster's pattern. This gave some tone. The next step was a slight opening of the lips. The vowel 'Ah' was found to spoil the tone at once, but 'E' and 'OO' proved serviceable, especially the former; so this was retained and

used continuously. Then some of the exercises already used for the treble boys were introduced, transposed to the proper compass. This was the most useful one:

transposed by semitones up to C.

Then the ascending scale in even notes, followed by the descending one, within the same compass.

Having secured some tone, the next question was the singing of an inner part. First, while the youths sang one note, a higher one was sounded on the piano, first softly, then more loudly:

When it had become possible to retain this note against its antagonist, it was an easy step to using one voice against another, and we soon got on to chords of two, three, four and five parts. This is what then appeared:

The above was started by each in succession, so that by going through the row every singer had a turn at every note. Much interest followed this process, and progress was soon apparent.

The next step was to take hymn-tunes, at first very simple ones, sung only to the vowel 'E.' By directions to watch carefully the notes, and when they rose to sing up, and *vice versa*, we presently got something approaching the pitch. Then the time was introduced by beating, as with the boys; and it was soon possible to get the tune right. This was practised, first with the alto part played prominently on the pianoforte, and then with the alto and treble. At first this latter introduced confusion, but step by step confidence and power were gained, until before very long that trouble was vanquished. Then we called in a few treble boys to

sing their part against the altos. Again there was confusion, and again it was conquered.

It was, however, some time before these neophytes were able to sing a part against the whole of the other voices. Their worst antagonists were of course the trebles, and these were therefore most frequently pitted against them.

All the time we were using chiefly the vowel 'E'; occasionally 'OO'; but nothing else. In course of time we tried the words with the music. At first this meant renewed failure, for the tone became completely vitiated; but by degrees we got one word successfully, then another, until before long all could be given with equally good tone.

In the early stages the youths were directed to sing very little when the other voices were at work; but gradually and tentatively to put a note in where they felt able. At beginning, they were completely overwhelmed by hearing parts all around them; but we proceeded steadily with our eyes on the goal, and never allowed difficulties to act as discouragements.

The results of all this were beyond every expectation. Within a year of the time of commencement, these raw youths, who started with no tone and no power of keeping a part, were singing correctly and with good effect all the regular church music, including the chanting of the Psalms, such Services as Stanford in *B* flat and Hopkins in *F*, and such anthems as Mendelssohn's 'As the Hart Pants' and Handel's 'Hallelujah' Chorus; and they had become quite valuable church singers. The chief difficulty lay in facing the first beginnings; there was nothing to build upon. After a few months, success was certain; but at the first it needed a sanguine temperament to believe that good results could by any possibility be obtained.

The writer has felt this to be one of the most interesting experiences of his musical life; he has therefore described it in the hope that it may be of use to readers placed in similar circumstances.

PART III

THE RENDERING OF CHURCH MUSIC

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CHAPTER I

THE VALUE OF WORDS

All art is the product of a process of evolution. To understand the use and exercise of an art like music, it is necessary frequently to consider, and to bear in mind, the origins from which it is derived.

The origin of ecclesiastical music may be seen in the origin of all music — the man striving to express in sound the emotions within his mind.

Speech expresses thought; music, emotion. The two are often intermingled. There is seldom speech without emotion; though, of course, there may be emotion without speech.

Vocal music clearly finds its origin in the natural inflexions of the voice in speaking, and these inflexions are primarily dependent upon the sense and emotion of the words. A sentence containing a question will terminate with a rising inflexion; one containing an emphatic statement, with a falling pitch.

For a choirmaster to achieve the highest perfection of result, it is necessary that he realize the value and beauty of words in themselves: first, as mere combinations of sounds; secondly, as each enfolding a sense which long use and association has widened and extended with a hundred memories, making the word a familiar friend; and thirdly, as modified by the juxtaposition of other words, thus creating a rhythm — in itself a thing of interest and beauty. Speaking of the importance of choice of language, Lord Chesterfield wrote: "I will willingly exchange and give up some degree of rough sense for a good degree of pleasing sound."

A succession of words always involves some sort of rhythm, *i.e.*, a formal alternation of strong and weak, long and short, vocal units. In modern languages the strong and weak elements are what chiefly arrest the attention; in

the old classical languages the principal things considered were the long and short elements.

Rhythm may be regular or irregular; the former is found in poetry, the latter in prose.

It would seem that the rendering of our English language has lost greatly by the almost universal attention given to the subject of force-accent to the exclusion of considerations of quantity. Yet the latter must always be present, and the student who does consider it will find it a matter of high interest, and will be amply rewarded by the increased elegance and beauty of the results obtained.

In the golden age of Latin and Greek literature the most minute attention was given to the quantity of syllables, and most elaborate and artistic devices were invented, in which the formal structure of poetry was laid. A study of these designs will be of advantage to every musician; it will show whence our modern instrumental music takes its origin, and furnish suggestions for its further advancement.

The quantity, long or short, of every vowel was considered, and the juxtaposition of consonants taken into account. Long vowels were, of course, treated as such; short vowels were taken as short unless succeeded by two or more consonants, in which case they also were treated as long. Then they were arranged to fall into the formal designs laid down.

The poet Horace used twenty-three of these designs. A few illustrations are here given, to show the way in which they were treated.

a. Greater Alcaic: — — | ⏑ — | — ‖ — ⏑ ⏑ — | ⏑ —

b. Iambic Dimeter Hypermeter: ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — | —

c. Minor Alcaic: — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ | — ⏑

d. Sapphic: — ⏑ | — — | — ⏑ ⏑ | — ⏑ | — ⏑

e. Adonic: — ⏑ ⏑ | — —

f. Asclepiadic Choriambic Tetrameter: — — | — ⏑ ⏑ — | — ⏑ ⏑ — | ⏑ —

g. Glyconic: — — | — ⏑ ⏑ — | ⏑ —

h. Acephalous Iambic Dimeter: — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ —

i. Iambic Trimeter Catalectic: ⏑ — | ⏑ — ‖ ⏑ — | ⏑ — ‖ ⏑ — | —

Here are the same formulæ filled in with words:

1. *a.* Descende cælo et dic age tibia
regina longum Calliope melos,
b. seu voce nunc mavis acuta,
c. seu fidibus citharave Phœbi.

2. *d.* Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum
semper urgendo neque, dum procellas
cautus horrescis, nimium premendo
e. litus iniquum.

3. *f.* Crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam
majorumque fames. Jure perhorrui
late conspicuum tollere verticem,
g. Mæcenas, equitum decus.

4. *h.* Non ebur neque aureum
i. mea renidet in domo lacunar.

That learned and voluminous writer, J. E. Ellis, directs that to secure the correct manner of rendering the rhythm of the above a metronome should be used, and the words made to fit in with its beats. But it would appear that this cannot truly represent the original method, for there must have been subtle differences to be noticed in an artistic performance beyond the mere rough division into long and short. A dipthong must have taken longer to pronounce than a simple long vowel; three consonants must have taken longer than two. The true rendering would probably give a kind of *tempo rubato;* a rhythm strict yet at the same time free, firm yet flexible — the true rhythm of all cultured speech, and the true rhythm of cultured singing.

By changing the signs — and ⏑ into musical notes, what looks like a piece of modern instrumental rhythm appears. But there is an important difference. In modern music each successive measure occupies nominally the same portion of time as its fellows; in the rhythm we are considering, the measures vary in length, thus conveying to the modern mind an idea of prose.

The care and labour expended by the old poets upon the writing of poetry in these designs is almost incredible; and its study is fascinating and engrossing.

The thing called *accentus* in the ancient languages was not at all what we mean by the word 'accent,' but referred to the rise and fall of the voice in speaking; and to this also an immense amount of attention was given, Cicero, Quintilian and others having written treatises upon it. To-day accent means *stress*, which seems to have had little place in ancient speech. Its dominating presence in English prevents complete freedom in dealing with the quantity of vowels and consonants, but it by no means either prevents the bestowal of care upon it, or renders such care unnecessary.

Stress-accent is of three kinds, syllabic, verbal (or logical), and structural. The first is the unvarying emphasis on a certain syllable in every word of more than one syllable; the second, the particular emphasis upon a certain word or words in any sentence to mark its importance (and this may vary greatly according to the sense which it is desired to convey); the third is the emphasis upon certain clauses or sentences which require special prominence.

Stress-accent does not exclude considerations of quantity, but combines quite easily with them. The teacher of elocution and of true singing will find little trouble with the former; he should give much attention to the latter.

The chief difficulty in considering quantity in English is the impossibility of dividing into syllables merely short and long.

There are many intermediate stages. These will become manifest by analysis and experience. Though they increase the difficulty, they also increase the interest to a corresponding extent. As an illustration, the first sentence of the service of Morning Prayer may be taken:

To begin with, the obviously long and short syllables will be marked:

'Ālmīghtў ănd mōst mērcĭfŭl Fāthēr.'

Then, of the long syllables, those possessing a stress-accent will take additional time:

'Ālmīghtў ănd mōst mērcĭfŭl Fāthēr.'

But the three consonants after 'most' will give it additional weight; therefore it also may take a double mark:

'mōst'

The three consonants after the short 'and' will increase it, so therefore it will take more time than '-ty' and '-ci', thus:

'ănd'

'-ful' is followed by two consonants. It will take more time than the shortest syllable, but not so much as 'and.' It may be marked thus:

'-fŭl'

The last syllable '-ther' will take less time than 'Al-'. It may be marked:

'-thĕr.'

A slight difference might also be observed between the final '-ty' of the first word and '-ci-' in 'merciful'; but it is perhaps impossible to express this on paper. The whole sentence will now appear:

'Ālmīghtў ănd mōst mērcĭfŭl Fāthĕr.'

No less than six different quantities have now been arrived at, and it is possible that a minute examination might detect even more. Other sentences should be studied in the same way, and with the same attention.

At first sight this plan may seem both unnecessary and impossible to the student new to the subject. But he need not feel discouraged. He must not be tempted to think either that he will never acquire proficiency himself or that he will never be able to impart his knowledge to his disciples. It is the first steps that are difficult; and it is the first steps that are of the greatest importance. The mere thinking of these points will give fresh interest to the whole study of speech-sounds, and the mere rough directions to the singers as to short and long will give new life to their efforts, and supply a ring of reality to all their work. As a guiding principle at the outset, it should be the aim to 'make every syllable long, unless you are *quite sure* it should be short.' If this is carefully and persistently enforced, all the rest will follow with little effort.

CHAPTER II

WORDS AND MUSIC

In ancient times words and music were always combined in poetry. To-day it is said that a poet 'sings' when it is meant that he writes down his beautiful thoughts in beautiful words. The word 'sing' is used in a purely figurative sense. But in early times, before printing made the multiplication of written words and music easy, the poet used to recite his own verses, and this, not in the ordinary speaking voice, but with fixed musical inflexions, producing a kind of 'plain-song.' Here the words were not fettered by the music, as is often the case to-day, but retained their own force and freedom, with the added charm and strength gained by musical variations in pitch. Of the exact nature

of this music we must perforce remain in ignorance; the traditions of its rendering are entirely lost, and attempts to decipher it result only in conjectural readings which may or may not approach the original to a certain extent. But the general principle upon which it was constructed is as clear as daylight. It was the reinforcing the sense of the words, and the revealing, in a fuller and more convincing manner than is possible with mere speech, their underlying sense.

This principle remained and held sway until the advent of instrumental music as we now know it — only some four or five hundred years ago. It then, encroached upon and pushed aside by its powerful rival, gradually lost ground, until almost forgotten. In the circling changes of evolution, it is now again coming to the front, and promises to be one of the striking characteristics of the music of the future. It is remarkable that the old formal rhythms of classical poetry have their counterpart to-day in the varying formal rhythms of instrumental music. The art of combining long and short in formal designs passed away from verbal composition to reappear in pure musical composition.

The formal inflexions of the classical languages find a counterpart in the formal inflexions of Ecclesiastical ritual music, handed down to us through the centuries which divide the present day from the dawn of the Christian era.

The simplest inflexion of Ecclesiastical song consists of a mere rising or falling of the voice at the termination of a clause; *e.g.*,

A. The mediation of the 2nd tone:

which is the same in the Litany chant.

B. The cadence of the 4th tone, 1st ending:

These were gradually developed by increasing the number of rising and falling notes, until phrases of great elaboration were reached. Florid figures appeared at various points in a tune, producing endless variety but always

perfectly free, and governed by the words. Such a thing as our barred rhythm has no counterpart in any of the old ecclesiastical music. All the notes were not, of course, and could not have been, of the same length; but their regulation appears to have depended invariably on the taste of the performer and the requirements of the words. Notes of various shapes are found, and the shape had some bearing upon the length; but this must have been only in a free and approximate way.

This matter is clearly dealt with by the Benedictines of Stanbrook in their book 'Gregorian Music' (1879)*. The following passage is of interest:

"Firstly, with regard to the Virga. We have seen that in the system of neum-accents it originally consisted of a tail only (/) and that its head was added to specify the note; whilst in the neum-point system, by the irony of fate, it consisted of only a head and became possessed of a tail by evolution. So much for facts. After the introduction of the staff, the Virga had no longer the same *raison d'être* as before (the notes being then determined, not by the form of the sign, but by its position on the staff), and it became a mere matter of choice whether a Virga or a punctum (*i.e.*, a tailed note or a square) should be used for a single note. In most MSS., the Virga is employed arbitrarily, but in some it is pretty generally used for the first syllable of each word, in others for the last, while in others it is invariably employed for every note standing alone. It is plain then that to the minds of those who used the Virga in such varied ways, the tailed note had no value as to time.

"The same is to be said of diamond notes. Their form is due simply to their being made with a broad pen held obliquely.

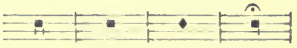
"How surprised the good old monastic scribes would be, could they hear the theories evolved from the accidental squares, tails, or diamonds traced by their unwitting pens. They would learn the importance of a tailed note, the respectable mediocrity of a square, and the insignificance of a diamond.

* New York, Benziger Bros.

"We do not, however, mean to say that in Plain Chant all the notes are of absolutely equal length, for this is far from the truth. The principle which we would insist on is this — that one must not seek indications of time value of a note in its *shape*, for this value depends, not on the shape of the note, but, if we may say so, on circumstances, and chiefly on the words to which the music is set.

"Practically, the important point to remember is that in Plain-chant *the notes have no value of their own, but only that of the syllables to which they are sung*."

This might appear to settle the question as to the length of the notes in mediæval music; but in the introduction to Merbecke's Common Praier Noted (1549) the following directions are found:

"In this booke is conteyned so much of the Order of Common Prayer as is to be song in Churches: wherein are used only these iiii. sortes of notes.  The first is a strene note, and is a breue. The second is a square note, and is a semybreue. The iii. a prycke, and is a mynymne. And when there is a prycke by the square note, that prycke is half as muche as the note that goeth before it. The iiii. is a close, and is only used at y^{e} end of a verse"; showing that at that time there was certainly some idea that the shape of the note did govern the length. But a perusal of Merbecke's actual setting indicates again that the directions given must have been intended for the guidance of beginners, rather than as hard and fast rules; for they cannot possibly be applied literally without distorting the words.

All old music, as the student will remember, was in unison; but the gradual evolution of vocal harmony which began dimly somewhere about the ninth century, and attained such a pinnacle of perfection in the sixteenth, had a most important effect upon the ecclesiastical chant. At first, harmonized music was as free in its rendering as unisonal, but as its complications increased, and the intricacy of cross-rhythms, and multiplication of parts, came into use, the difficulty of keeping the various voices together when

singing with their old freedom became manifest. This liberty became more and more restricted, until in the eighteenth century it was altogether lost, and the tyranny of the bar asserted itself.

With the revived appreciation and use of the masterpieces of the sixteenth century, is now coming a clearer view as to their correct rendering. The free, flowing rhythm of the early unisonal music was originally apparent in the early harmonized music; with only the restriction necessary for keeping the voices together, the words still led, the music followed, and a perfect expression of the sense and feeling of the words was the result.

The student is recommended to make a constant and diligent study of the above subject. Space forbids further examination here; but it is of the utmost importance to the choirmaster whose function it is to deal with church music, and will give him his true foundations upon which to build habits of thought. The conclusion of it all is, that in the beginning of ecclesiastical music the words were rendered with perfect freedom; when pure choral music developed, they still retained all the essentials of this freedom; to-day, although the voices are sometimes hampered and confined by instrumental accompaniment, yet they can still be dealt with by the skilled teacher in the old spirit and can frequently be made to go upon the old lines.

CHAPTER III

THE FIXED PLAIN-SONG OF THE SERVICE (MONOTONES)

In England the Choral Service — *i.e.*, the service in which ecclesiastical monotone is alternated with the traditional inflexions — has made very rapid strides in the last few years. From having been considered, only a few years ago, a strange and exotic thing in parish churches, it is now looked upon as quite a usual and ordinary thing. Would that the standard of its rendering had progressed at the same pace!

In the American Church the introduction (or rather the restoration) of the Choral Service has been much slower. In some regions it is practically unknown, even where large highly paid choirs are maintained, and other parts of the service rendered in an elaborate manner.

The fixed Plain-Song of the service sung by the choir consists of:

(1) Monotones — the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, the Creeds, etc.

(2) The Versicles and Responses.

(3) The Litany.

(4) Portions of the Communion Service.

1. Monotones

The first monotone taken by the choir will be the General Confession, and to this the writer would urge that the most careful attention should be given. Those unaccustomed to taking pains over it are often surprised, when they look into the matter, to find how many mistakes have been overlooked, how much work and care is required to remedy these, and how great satisfaction will be gained by doing this in a thorough and systematic way. I always think that, from the point of view of efficiency, the rendering of the General Confession is the very keystone of a choir's work.

The choirmaster's first difficulty will be to overcome the reluctance of the members to give their best attention to it. Some will consider it beneath their dignity to practise words which they think they know by heart; others will be impatient to hurry on to 'the anthem,' or something else they consider equally attractive. All this must be resolutely resisted. Constant persistence and perseverance must be shown until the result is achieved, and then further practice must be given to maintain the standard.

In choral monotoning all the following points should be carefully kept in view:

a. Accuracy of pitch,

b. Vocal tone,

c. Vowel-quality,
d. Distinctness of consonants,
e. Stress-accent,
f. Quantity,
g. Phrasing,
h. Pace,
i. Volume of tone.

These are placed in logical sequence, and in each stage of practice may be separately dealt with; later, they must all be combined. Some will give more trouble than others.

The writer feels strongly that all this trouble is well worth while, merely to gain the rendering of these simple and beautiful sentences of pure English in perfect taste, which implies perfect reverence; yet it will be an additional encouragement to the teacher to remember that every moment of the time spent upon these words will, directly or indirectly, help him with something else; as every point noticed is a point that will recur at another place. It will now be supposed that we are starting to practise the Confession:

Almighty and most merciful Father.

The first syllable, 'Al,' should receive the full vowel-sound of 'aw,' but the second syllable must take the stress-accent — an important point frequently overlooked; in fact, it seems to be the aim of some choirs, when left to themselves, to place an accent invariably upon the first and the last syllables of each sentence, apparently from over-anxiety to secure a prompt start at the beginning, and a desire to keep up the pitch at the end. This painful mistake must be rigidly excluded.

The third syllable, 'ty,' should be carefully rendered, and must not be run into the succeeding vowel.

'And' is very seldom correctly given. All three elements, one vowel and two consonants, should be distinctly heard; one, two, or even the three, are sometimes omitted by inefficient choirs.

'Most.' — Here the 'o' should be well rounded, and

the final consonants clearly sounded; the last is usually omitted. The word should receive sufficient accent to show its importance in the sentence.

'Merciful.'— This word is frequently mispronounced. Its quantity should be noticed (— ⏑ ⏑), the first vowel should have its true sound, the pace should not be hurried.

'Father.' — Often mispronounced by a false accent on the second syllable.

We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.

Notice, first, that this sentence contains a parallel, like the majority of Psalm verses, therefore the voice should dwell slightly upon 'erred.' This is important. *We* have erred, but the sheep have only strayed.

Avoid a false accent on 'We.'

Pronounce 'and' correctly.

Sound the 'd' in 'strayed.'

'From,' though unaccented, should be distinctly rendered.

'Thy ways' should each have equal length.

'Like lost sheep.' — One of the pitfalls for boys. Make them pronounce every consonant, 'k,' 'st,' 'p' — all generally omitted.

We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.

Notice, first, that the logical accent of the sentence falls on 'too much': this is what we have to repent of. Again avoid the false accent on 'we.'

'Have followed.' The 'v' and 'f' coming together will cause trouble; pronounce them both.

'The.' — Few will need the reminder that here, and elsewhere, the rule of pronunciation is that the sound should be 'thŭ' before a consonant and 'thee' before a vowel.

'Devices and desires' — another pitfall. I have heard the rendering 'device ŭ desires.' Give each syllable careful attention.

'Of our own hearts.' — The chief accent will be on 'own.' Sound the 'ts' in 'hearts' distinctly.

We have offended against thy holy laws.

The first three syllables, being all unaccented and of short quantity, require special attention.

The last consonant in 'offended' is frequently omitted

'Thy holy laws.' — Three accented long syllables. Open out the 'o' in 'holy.'

We have left undone those things which we ought to have done.

'Left undone.' — Three short vowels, lengthened by consonants and logical importance.

'Which we ought.' — A difficult series. Pronounce well the 'ch,' and the 't'; and take each word deliberately.

'To have done.' — 'Have' frequently suffers: attend to it.

The above sentence is a good illustration of our rule that 'every syllable should be treated as long unless you are quite sure it is short' (p. 102). In fourteen syllables there is only one ('to') which is undoubtedly short. It may be mentioned, that whenever this little word appears as part of the verb infinite, it should be taken very lightly, with the vowel-sound of the short 'oo.'

And we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

Notice the three 't's' towards the end. The emphasis should fall on 'not.'

And there is no health in us.

Again notice the 'and.' Dwell upon 'no health.'

But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.

Here there are several important points. As regards phrasing, do not separate 'O Lord' from the rest of the sentence, as is so often done. Commas, it must be remembered, may be grammatical or rhetorical. The former do not, as a rule, require any break in continuity. 'O Lord' is in apposition to 'thou,' and does not introduce a new thought. The requirements of the first comma will be met by dwelling slightly upon 'thou'; the second should be disregarded.

'Mercy upon.' — This phrase, occurring so often in the service, is usually incorrectly taken. The two vowels 'y' and 'u' should not be merged, but distinctly and separately sounded with the slightest possible division between them.

'Miserable offenders.' — The group of five short syllables between the two accents requires care. They should not be hurried, but be taken neatly and evenly. The 'o' is short; it is sometimes treated as long.

Spare thou those, (them) O God, who (which) confess their faults.*

Notice the phrasing again, and treat 'O God' in the same way as 'O Lord.'

Here is another case of a sentence with only one syllable to be treated as short.

Restore those who (them that) are penitent.

The triplet in 'penitent' is important, and here is another case where the choir-member loves to dwell upon the final syllable, when it is obviously incorrect.

According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Long as this sentence is, it is necessary that it should be taken as one phrase in one breath; otherwise the sense is obscured. A little thought will show the reason of this.

If a break *had* to be made, it would be after 'promises,' not, as is customary, after 'mankind.'

Choirs seldom pronounce 'according' neatly.

'Christ Jesus' is difficult to render; the three adjacent consonants should all be sounded.

'Our Lord' should both be long, and the final 'd' distinct.

And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake.

One continuous phrase.

Take care over the 'd.'

'O most merciful' — three words requiring attention. The 'o's' should be round and full; the 'st' distinct; the trisyllable even.

* The words in brackets are those in the English Prayer Book.

'His sake.' — The two 's's' (of which the first is, of course, actually a 'z') must be quite distinct.

That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life.

A break in the phrasing after 'godly' is almost universal, but is obviously wrong. The requirements of the commas are met by dwelling upon the preceding word; a break in continuity destroys the sense. The three adjectives should be dwelt upon with equal force.

To the glory of thy holy Name.

'To the.' — Light and distinct.

'Glory.' — The chief vowel very full.

'Thy holy name.' — The three long vowels should be given equal weight, with perhaps a little extra force on 'holy.'

The above analytical criticism may perhaps strike the reader at first sight as somewhat too minute, but further thought will show that it is of vital necessity. All the points indicated are essential to the correct enunciation of the English language; it ought to be considered a disgrace to ignore any one of them.

When they have all been observed, it is probable that the first desideratum, accuracy of pitch, will be found to be less difficult to achieve than had previously been supposed.

The writer would again take the opportunity of urging a strong plea in favour of determined insistence upon this foundation. It seems almost incredible that sinking in pitch, instead of being the exception, is at present undoubtedly the rule in Church choirs. The one obstacle to its removal is the idea held by so many choirmasters that it is inevitable, with a consequent lessened sense of its deplorable culpability. A choir that cannot recite a few simple sentences upon the pitch it intends them to hold, but confesses its helpless inability to do so, ought to be ashamed to show its face at all.

A monotone is *not* a monotone if it moves from one pitch to another; it is a gradual descent, for which there is

no name in the vocabulary of art. It is a thing that is wrong, for which no defence ever has been, or ever can be, attempted. It is a thing that every musician of taste should make it his business to exterminate with all possible speed.

The best, and only, advice as to how to do this is:

'Sapere aude';
Incipe.'*

Let it be known that *flattening is against the rules of the choir;* and that its abolition must precede all advance in other directions. When this stand is taken the fault will soon disappear, to the satisfaction of all concerned, and to the strengthening of the art work all along the line.

The writer has often been asked by earnest and disheartened choirmasters for directions how to abolish flattening. He always gives the same advice: Believe in your power to do it, and insist upon it until it is done.

Two other points remain — pace, and volume.

The pace of a monotone should be moderate; not so quick as to give a sense of hurry, not so slow as to induce weariness. The right pace will be secured by allowing sufficient time to enunciate every verbal element distinctly, and no more.

The volume of tone will vary with the words. The Prayer Book directs that the Confession be taken 'with an humble voice.' This may be interpreted as a soft, quiet tone. The tone may be somewhat increased for the Lord's Prayer, and still further for the Creed, which should be taken in a firm and decided manner.

The question of pitch for a monotone is important. The custom has been general of taking a higher note than is necessary. There is no reason for retaining the favorite *G*. For the Confession it is best to employ *E* for a large building, and *D* for a small one. For the Creed, *F* is often quite high enough, or even *E*.

The student should examine and analyze the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in the same way as we have done the Confession. The writer has found it helpful to have the Confession written out on a separate card for choir use,

* Dare to be wise; begin.

with all the important points of rendering indicated by special marks, thus:

Almīghty and mōst mērciful Father.

That we may hereafter live a gōdly, * rīghteous and sōber līfe.

Red marks over words = long. Green marks below = distinct. * = no pause.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIXED PLAIN-SONG (continued)

2. The Versicles and Responses. 3. The Litany. 4. The Amen

Misunderstanding is widespread as to the correct rendering of the Versicles and Responses. It is caused by the way in which the music is now almost universally printed.

When the reader understands what the Versicles and Responses are, and whence they came, he will know how they should be rendered.

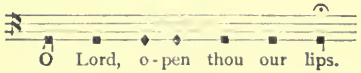
It is usual to speak of the 'Ferial' and 'Festal' Responses. There does not appear to be any authority for this distinction; but it is harmless. The first term refers to the ancient plain-song, generally used in a harmonized form with the principal part at the top; the second, to the same, harmonized with the original melody in the tenor.

This principal part, or melody, or tune, is simply a monotone with an inflected ending. Its rendering, as regards relative pace, should be precisely the same as a monotone without inflexions; the inflexions affect the pitch, not the pace. This is shown by a glance at the original setting in Merbecke.

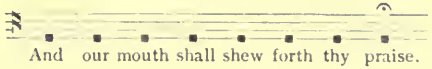
Most unfortunately the phrases have been distorted into various shapes by the efforts of editors to fit the music to the words with modern notation, generally with the result that the singers imagine that the first part of the sentence should be hurried and the inflected emphasized. This takes away all the beauty from the passages, and has caused much prejudice against the Choral Service. When properly sung, the effect is singularly impressive and convincing, and is quite a revelation to those accustomed to another manner.

It would probably be a great improvement to take these phrases as they were originally intended to be sung, in unison, without harmony either for the voices or the accompaniment. In future developments perhaps this plan will come into use. The incessant use of harmony throughout the service at every possible point, has certainly not been an unmixed good in Church music. The bold, straightforward effect of unison singing, both here and at other places, is a thing that ought not to be lost.

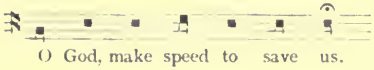
It will now be of value to consider the rendering of both the Versicles and Responses; though only the latter are sung by the choir, the two are so intimately connected that success can be achieved only by comparing them together.



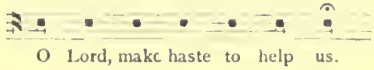
Take this in the same manner as any other monotone; dwell on the three opening 'o's.'



Take at precisely the same pace as the versicle. Dwell on 'shew forth,' but not on 'thy.'



Take 'make speed' carefully, with the consonants distinct; 'to' very lightly; and accent 'save.'



Take this in precisely the same manner as the preceding.

The pace is sometimes too hurried here. A deliberate, quiet monotone is required. Separate 'be to the,' pronounce 'and' distinctly, and be careful with 'Holy Ghost.'

This is often far too hurried. 'In the' should be carefully rendered, and the whole taken at a deliberate pace, with no slackening at the end.

NOTE. Here is the place to call attention to an important point in the structure of this sentence. It consists of four clauses, referring respectively to the past, the present, the future, and the further future — eternity. The Latin makes this clear:

Sicut erat in principio,
et nunc,
et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum.

The symmetrical division of these is not into one against three, as is customary, but into two against two, with the 'Amen' taken separately, as a conclusion to the whole hymn; thus:

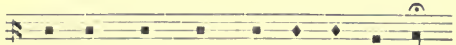
{ As it was in the beginning,
{ is now:
{ and ever shall be,
{ world without end.
Amen.

This rendering should be chosen here and retained whenever the 'Gloria Patri' reappears in the course of the service.

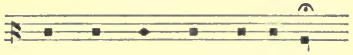
The chief thing to notice here is the rendering of 'mercy upon'; pronounce them in the manner directed on p. 111. Do not drag the ending.

Our Father, who (which) art in heaven, etc.

The priest should pronounce the first two words alone, the choir alone repeating them after him; then all should continue together.



This commences with five long syllables. Give a little extra length to 'Lord,' but do not let 'show' and 'thy' suffer. Do not dwell unduly on '-on,' as is so often done.



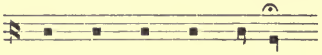
Notice the 'd' in 'and'; take the whole sentence evenly. Do not dwell upon 'thy,' nor upon the second syllable of 'salvation.'

Make 'the' very light.

Be careful with the rendering of 'mercifully.' Do not delay the ending, and do not prolong '-on.' Notice that the logical accent falls upon 'call,' not upon '-on' or 'thee.'

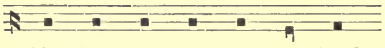
Avoid wrongly accenting 'endue' and 'ministers.' Do not extend 'righteousness.'

Do not drag 'joyful.' The emphasis should be evenly distributed over the four accented syllables of the sentence.

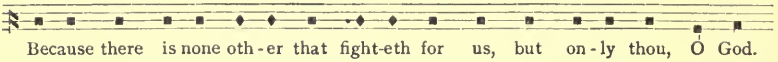


'People' should be short. What is the vowel of the second syllable?

'Thine' is often wrongly emphasized. There are two accents in the sentence — 'bless' and '-her-.'



Do not emphasize 'our,' which gives a selfish meaning. 'Peace' is the important word. 'O Lord' is often taken too slowly.



Emphasize 'none other' and 'only thou.'

Sound the two 'k's' in 'make clean.'

The first three final consonants require care. Do not separate 'Holy Spirit,' but take breath after the second. The ending should be slightly slower than the rest, but not dragged. The whole may be taken very softly.

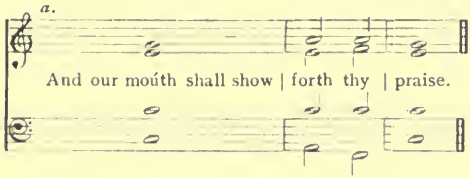
Now the prevailing mistake in the rendering of the above is to take the inflexions too heavily. This is in consequence of the way the music is at present usually printed; minims (half-notes) being used instead of crotchets (quarter-notes); the performers so often forgetting the rule that in plain-song the notes represent the pitch, *not* the time-value.

The opposite mistake occurs in the rendering of Tallis's Responses, and (curiously enough) for the same reason. Here the monotoned parts will be taken too heavily.

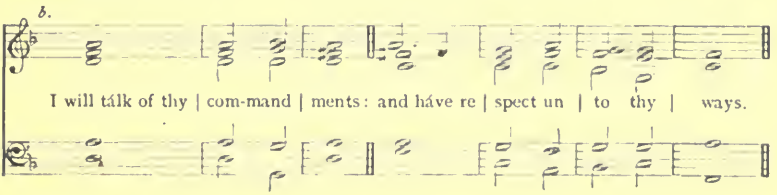
Tallis, following the old plain-song, wrote a separate note for each syllable, but there is no indication to show that he had any intention of changing its pace.

The modern singer, finding minims and semibreves written, concludes that these indicate slow time, and all indication of the true rendering is obscured by the insertion of bars (things unknown to Tallis). A clear idea of Tallis's intentions is gained by comparing the written notes of the Responses with his settings of Psalm chanting.

By some modern psalm pointers the former would have been written:



the latter:



with the resultant 'gabble' from the singers. Tallis meant his Responses to be taken in exactly the same way as the Psalm verses. If the reader bears this in mind, he will entirely alter the customary ponderous style: he will return to the composer's intention, and reproduce a thing of beauty.

It will not be necessary to go over all those sentences again; the remarks already made upon the 'Ferial' Responses apply with equal force to the 'Festal.' It is of interest to notice that Tallis has already adopted the division of the 'Gloria Patri' advocated in this book upon p. 116; it is a matter of surprise that, though this setting has been sung daily in our churches for centuries, it has not occurred to choirmasters to follow its plan at other points in the service.

It has been suggested that when the 'Ferial' Responses are in use a return should be made to pure unison. This makes congregational singing easy and effective. When the Tallis settings are used, the question arises as to what part the congregation shall sing, the treble or the tenor. In actual practice they always sing the treble, but in some places attempts are being made to induce them to sing the tenor — the original plain-song. This is a difficult task, and it may well be questioned whether the composer would have advocated it himself. It must not be forgotten that Tallis wrote for a balanced Cathedral choir, and though, following the conventional use of the day, he placed the *canto fermo* in the tenor, it is probable that, after the music was written, he regarded it as a complete whole, following the model of so much contrapuntal music of the period.

3. The Litany

Not much need be said upon this if the directions already given for monotones and the Responses have been mastered. The same spirit and style should prevail in the Litany.

Here again there are two uses commonly heard, the 'Ferial' and the 'Festal,' so called; though the Tallis set-

ting of the Litany is almost unknown compared with the widespread use of his Responses.

A few points may be dwelt upon. In the opening petitions a break should be made after 'Father'; then the qualifying clause 'of heaven' will follow in the same manner as the corresponding clauses in the second and third petitions.

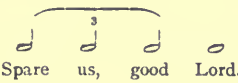
'Have mercy upon us.' Render this as directed in the Confession and the Responses (p. 110).

'Miserable sinners' requires the greatest care. The third syllable of the first word should *not* be accented, as is so often the case. The second word should not be jerked with the accent on its second syllable. The quantity scheme is as follows:

The writer would dwell strongly upon this point, as the fault is so general and so deep-rooted that it requires the most persistent efforts to eradicate it.

'*Spare us, good Lord.*'

The first word should not be held. The first three words form a triplet, thus:



'*Good Lord, deliver us.*'

The accent should be placed upon the second word, 'Lord.' The last three syllables should not be hurried, as they usually are.

'*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*'

Take the first three words deliberately, with the logical accent on the second. 'Hear' should not be prolonged. The whole sentence should be smooth and even throughout, as in good reading.

The Versicles and Responses that follow should be taken in the same manner as those for Matins and Evensong: it will be unnecessary here to go through the details.

It is interesting to notice the printer's error after the prayer 'We humbly beseech thee,' where 'Amen' has been accidentally omitted. It is to be hoped that, with Prayer Book revision in the air, this mistake will soon be corrected.

4. The Amen

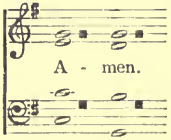
In a well-rendered choral service the singing of the 'Amens' will be one of the most striking features. Though this may appear a simple matter, it is yet one to which considerable attention should be given by choirmaster and choir.

As to the choice of cadence, it seems unfortunate that the authentic cadence

has become so common. In Merbecke the only 'Amen' given is on the monotone; this therefore has authority.

The Amen is certainly a part of the service in which the congregation is expected to join. But when the people sing they invariably double the soprano part; the result will be that, when the authentic cadence is used, it is the leading-note that will be doubled by the congregation, producing an effect known by every beginner in harmony to be an unpardonable blunder.

If, however, the monotoned treble, as given in Merbecke, be retained, it can be harmonized with the plagal cadence, producing a perfectly satisfactory effect when the congregation joins in with the doubled tonic, thus:



It is therefore suggested that, in places where congregational singing is expected, this cadence be retained.

Great care should be bestowed upon the rendering of the Amen. The choir should take a full breath during the last sentence read by the priest, and commence promptly directly after he has finished, sustaining the two chords for exactly equal length, counting two beats for each. Many and various are the renderings given by different choirs to this apparently very simple response; some will make the second syllable too long, others too short. It may be well to remind the reader that the second syllable, as written in the Greek, has the long vowel (η), not the short one (ε); an excessive shortening is therefore certainly incorrect.

Here is the place to make an emphatic protest against the custom, occasionally met with in England, frequently in America, of maintaining a kind of hybrid choral service by taking the priest's part in the Versicles in the speaking-voice while the Responses are sung by the choir, and also of having the Amens sung by the choir when the prayers have been simply spoken by the minister.

It is hoped that the ancient custom of the priest's singing the Versicles and monotoning the prayers, directed by the leaders of the Reformation to be retained as in times past, but which has unhappily fallen into abeyance, may soon be revived. But until it is, this dual method should be strenuously resisted by choirmasters of taste and education. Speaking and singing are both seemly and reasonable ways of rendering divine worship; but to combine the two in the way so often heard to-day is neither seemly nor reasonable. It has no more justification than the conducting of a service in two languages at the same time, and is about as artistic as the producing of a picture in which the one half should be painted and the other engraved.

CHAPTER V

PSALM CHANTING

Intimately connected with the foregoing are the Psalms. They are rendered by what is technically called chanting, as are occasionally the Canticles and other hymns. A clear understanding of the true art of chanting is the very centre and core of a choirmaster's work. One who has mastered it may be trusted to interpret successfully any department of ecclesiastical music.

A chant may properly be defined as 'a monotone concluding with an inflexion.' A single chant consists of this repeated twice; formerly, and still occasionally, preceded by another inflexion, called the 'intonation.' A double chant is, in form, two single chants joined together; a triple chant, three; and a quadruple chant, four.

Perhaps the best-known single chant is that used for the Litany:

Written in the modern conventional form, it would appear as follows:

To arrive at correct chanting it is necessary for the student to study the manner of ancient chanting, to note in what respects it differs from modern, and to substitute for the prevalent faults the old true method.

The true method of chanting remains in the modern plain-song books; a reference to 'The Manual of Plain-Song' (Novello & Co.) will show this. The modern prevalent errors have gradually crept in since the eighteenth century. An understanding of what they are, and how they

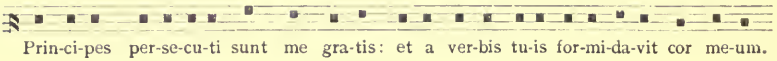
arose, will enable the student to correct them without much difficulty. Ancient, and true, chanting was, and is, the rendering of a monotone in the manner described in Chapter III, Part III, followed by an inflexion fitting the length and weight of the syllables for which it is used. The prevalent and incorrect chanting consists of a hurried recitation, more or less 'gabbled,' followed by an emphasized inflexion taken at a slower pace then the recitation, and sung in strict time, regardless of the weight, accent, sense and feeling of the words. The two are denoted respectively by the names 'Gregorian' and 'Anglican'—an unfortunate distinction, giving the impression that there are two rival systems; the truth being that there is only one proper method of chanting, and that all methods that differ from it are wrong and pernicious. So-called 'Gregorians' are usually sung in unison: so-called 'Anglicans' are usually sung in harmony. But this distinction is unessential; the former are sometimes taken in harmony with good effect, the latter are frequently sung in unison with excellent effect. Another distinction is that the former are built upon the old modes, the latter upon the modern scale. But even this does not make so sharp a cleavage as might be supposed, for the notes of the former sometimes approach so near to the modern scale-line as almost to cross the border; the latter are sometimes written to-day in tonalities which may be classified as old.

It is unnecessary here to press the fact that the old chanting, when used with the old chants, is correct. This is universally admitted. The thing to establish is, that the old chanting used with the *new* chants is equally correct.

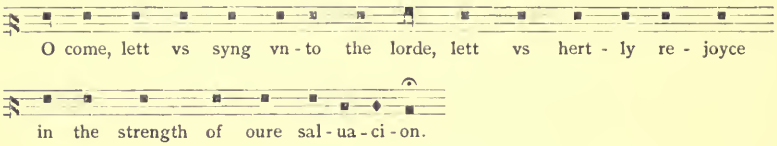
The faults of modern chanting are due to the use, and abuse, of bars and accent-marks. The latter are a blemish which should be removed with all speed; the former are, in the circumstances, a necessary evil; their ill effect can be counteracted by proper instruction.

In the old chanting a separate note was written to every syllable. This secured that the singer, led by his eye, pronounced the words in a seemly and natural manner, without undue hurrying or slackening, and with correct emphasis.

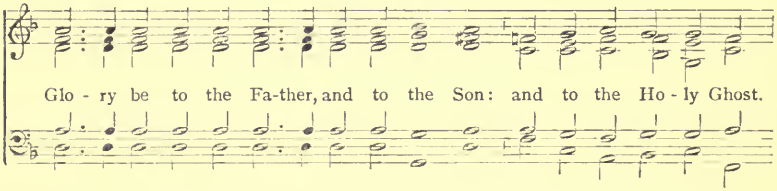
Before the Reformation the Psalms were sung in Latin, thus:



When the English translation came into use, the same method was followed with the English words. This is from Merbecke:



Just at this time harmony was taking the place of unison singing in many directions; and it occurred to the musicians of the day that this change could be introduced into chanting. A separate note was still written for each syllable, showing the relative pace of the various sounds, and all went well. A verse from Tallis's settings has already been given (p. 119); here is another:



Two new conditions then arose, which had to be met by a compromise. As soon as the harmonized chanting was heard, it became obvious that many new and beautiful effects were within reach of the musician. Harmony being admitted, a new realm of possibilities opened out for securing variety, interest and expression. Endless new chants were accordingly written, and are still being written, upon the lines made possible by harmony. Secondly, these were written in four- or five-part harmony, whereas formerly there was only one part. It now became impracticable to write out the notes to every syllable that was to be sung.

The books containing the music would have become too bulky for general use; the expense would have been prohibitive.

The only remaining course, and the one adopted, was that of writing the music once, and leaving the singers to adapt it to the words at the time of performance.

One serious loss ensued in course of time. As any chant might be used to any words, it was found impracticable to have chants of varying length, and so the conventional device of three measures followed by four became general, and the old variety in length of inflexion was lost.

The thing we know as 'pointing' was, however, undreamt of in the early days of harmonized chanting. The only pointing was that found in the Prayer Book to-day, viz., the mark (:) dividing the verses into two parts, to show where the second half of the chant was intended to commence.

This was what Cathedral choirs used, up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Then the bars, and other marks with which we are now so familiar, were introduced with the laudable object of getting the singers to keep together.

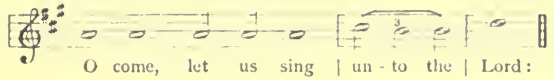
The rules for securing correct chanting, on the model of that left by the Reformation teachers, are as follows:—

1. The Recitation

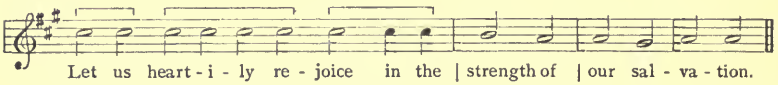
The pace of this should be the same as that of the inflexion. Long and short syllables should receive the same treatment in both. If the recitation happens to contain the same number of syllables as the inflexion, it should take approximately the same time to sing; if it contains twice as many syllables, it should take twice as long; *e.g.*,

O come, let us sing | unto · the | Lord:

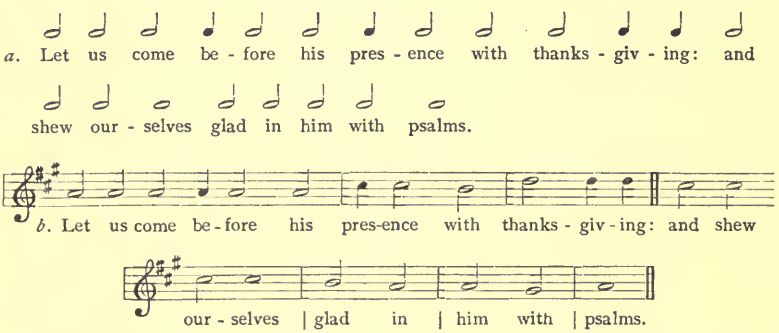
Here the inflexion has four syllables, the recitation, five; the relative time will be as follows (always remembering that semibreves, minims and crotchets, when used to indicate chanting, are to be regarded as only *approximate* guides):



In the second half of this verse there are nine syllables against six:



The best way to arrive at the correct pace of the recitation is to take any sentence and repeat it first as a simple monotone, and then again with the inflexions added, thus:


a. Let us come be-fore his pres-ence with thanks-giv-ing: and
shew our-selves glad in him with psalms.
b. Let us come be-fore his pres-ence with thanks-giv-ing: and shew
our-selves | glad in | him with | psalms.

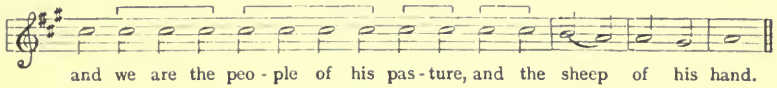
The above looks difficult, but it is really easy. The words of the recitation must set their own pace. As already pointed out, the notes used above are only approximate in length. Unfortunately, the association of modern notation with strict time is apt to mislead. The best guide would be the old square notes, but as these are not always understood, it has seemed preferable to use the other. The teacher should insist that the words containing the chief sense-elements should be prolonged, in order that they may arrest attention.

In the following sentence:

For he is the Lord our God: and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand,

the whole gives the reason for the invitation in the preceding verse. The antithesis is between the statement as to what 'he' is and what 'we' are. The strong words will be 'he,' 'Lord,' and 'God,' and 'we,' 'people,' 'pasture,' followed by the parallel 'sheep'—'hand.'

The first half of this sentence usually receives plenty of emphasis, being set to an inflexion. The emphasis in the second should exactly correspond ; but, being set to the reciting-note, it very seldom does. Render the whole as follows :



Exclamations, like ‘ lo,’ ‘ behold,’ ‘ look,’ ‘ yea,’ should always be prolonged.

A semibreve is conventionally written for the reciting-note. This merely gives the pitch, and is no indication as to length. Just as it is admissible to lengthen it to any extent, so it is imperative to shorten it to a minim, or a crotchet, when the words require it ; *e.g.*,

Proved | me and | saw my | works.

‘ Proved ’ should be the length of a minim (𝅗𝅥), with an accent.

And | to the | Holy | Ghost.

‘ And ’ should be the length of a crotchet (♩), without an accent.

For the | Lord sus- | tained | me.

‘ For the ’ should be taken as two crotchets (♩ ♩), without accent.

Summary

a. Sing the recitation slowly, *i.e.*, at the same pace as the inflexion.

b. Dwell upon important words, passing lightly over mere connecting-links.

c. Reduce the recitation semibreve to a minim or a crotchet when the words require it.

d. Ignore the 'accent' mark, when found in the Psalter. It is frequently placed upon an unaccented syllable; when on an accented one it is unnecessary, as common sense will supply the accent.

2. Final Words

Progress will best be made by considering these next.

One of the gravest errors in chanting is caused by the habit of emphasizing the last note of the chant, whatever the word set to it may be.

As much care should be taken over final words as over the recitation.

One, two, three, or four, syllables are set to the last note of an inflexion. These may be accented or unaccented, long or short.

a. ONE SYLLABLE

strong — *e.g.* 'unto the | Lŏ́rd.
medium — 'Tempted | mē̆.'
weak — 'a | vain | thĭ̄ng.'
very weak — 'sacrifice of | righteous- | nĕss.

b. TWO SYLLABLES

These should usually be taken as two minims; their weight will, however, vary. Here are several varieties:

| ālsō
| jūdgmēnt
| rīghteŏ̆us
| seāsŏ̄n
| prŏ̄spĕ̄r
sal- | vă̄tiŏn
| wĭ̄thĕr
| sĭ̄nnĕ̄rs

Compare these carefully, and pronounce them as in speaking.

c. THREE SYLLABLES

These should be rendered as a triplet, with slight modifications as follows:

| rĭghteŏusnĕss
| wĭldĕrnĕss
| wĭckĕdnĕss

ex- | ceĕdĭnglў
| sĕpŭlchrē
| vănĭtў

d. FOUR SYLLABLES

These should invariably be taken as a group of four even notes, *e.g.*,

| tĕstĭmŏniĕs.

It is important to note that, when studying the above, the student must not suppose that his duty is to take words and force them into certain moulds. The correct way to view the matter is from the very opposite direction. It is not the quantity-marks that make the word, but the word that furnishes the quantity-marks. The marks given here are intended to represent, as nearly as possible, what is the exact pronunciation that would be given by a cultured speaker — what he would give naturally without thinking of the matter. All words have their own natural quantity. It is the duty of the teacher to retain this in its purity, and to prohibit distortions and mispronunciations. He will not require any marks in actual practice, but it is sometimes of assistance to him to write down his impressions, in order to gain and retain accuracy. The commonest faults in the pronunciation of final words are undue hurry and false accent. If there is an accent, it invariably falls upon the first syllable following the bar; the remaining syllable, or syllables, should be extended, not contracted.

CHAPTER VI

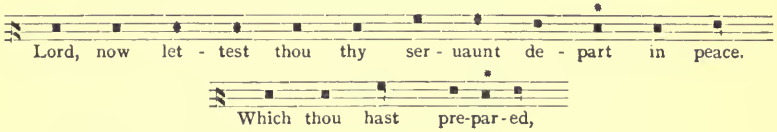
PSALM CHANTING (Continued)

3. Middle Words

These are the words falling between the bars in pointed Psalters. The one condition for rendering them correctly is to realize that *the bars, in chanting, do not involve either time or accent, but are merely convenient signs for showing where the words correspond with the notes of the musical inflexion.*

It is not always easy to convince people of this truism, so accustomed are they to the rigid time-dividing of the bars in instrumental music. A glance at a verse or two of the ancient chanting, or of the original 'Anglican' chanting, proves the truth of the above rule; *e.g.*,

a. From Merbecke:



b. From Tallis:

The reader can himself supply the bars that a modern 'pointer' would give to these extracts, and see how they would fit the places marked *.

It is well to go further and remember that all bars in music are mere accidental helps. Music could exist very well, and actually did exist until the sixteenth century, without them. When misunderstood, they do harm in instrumental music; they do more harm in ordinary vocal music; they introduce disastrous havoc into chanting.

The rule for the rendering of middle words is, that they shall continue the relative pace of the monotone, without perceptible break or interruption, until the final words are reached. They will vary greatly in length and weight: their natural pronunciation must in every case be retained.

a. ONE SYLLABLE

The two half-notes of the musical measure are frequently set to one syllable. In these cases, the notes must be reduced as far as possible in value; this reduction will vary in amount according as the word or syllable is light or heavy; *e.g.*,

Long: a | great – | God
without | end – |

Medium: the | dry – | land
and | fall – | down
in | due – | season

Short: a | gainst – | him
lifter | up – |

b. TWO SYLLABLES

When two syllables are set to the two notes of one measure, the strong and weak syllables should be carefully distinguished. The following varieties will be found:

Both very light: | tŏ thĕ |

Both light: | ĕvĕr |

Heavy and light:
| hōlў̆ |
| Kĭ̄ng ă- |
| strēngth ŏf |
| glād ĭn |

Both heavy:

| him with |
| hills is |
| Lord our |
| known my |

To render the above correctly the half-notes of the music must be treated in a very elastic manner; they will sound for the various groups somewhat as follows:

1 | ♩ ♩ |
2 | 𝅗𝅥 ♩ |
3 | 𝅗𝅥 ♩ |
4 | 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 |

Here again let it be remembered that the words will govern the music, not the music the words; the effect, though it would look irregular on paper, will, in actual use, sound natural and easy.

c. THREE SYLLABLES

When three syllables are set to the two musical notes, the usual dot will show which two are to be sung to one note. There is, however, much more to consider. Nearly as much variety will be found here as in the case of two syllables. The following illustrations will make this clear:

| unto . my | = | 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 · 𝅗𝅥 |
gener- | ation . and | = | 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 · 𝅗𝅥 |
| unto . the | = | 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 · 𝅗𝅥 |
im- | agine . a | = | ♩ 𝅗𝅥 · ♩ |
| counsel . to- | = | 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 · ♩ |

| and . to the | = | 𝅗𝅥 . 𝅘𝅥 𝅘𝅥 |

| law . of the | = | 𝅗𝅥 . 𝅗𝅥 𝅘𝅥 |

| laugh . them to | = | 𝅗𝅥 . 𝅗𝅥 𝅘𝅥 |

The elastic half-notes will easily be transmuted into these divisions and the words will give their true force and meaning.

d. FOUR SYLLABLES

Four syllables are not often placed within the space of one bar. When they are, the rendering will be easy. Two syllables will go to each note of the music, retaining their own force; *e.g.*,

| Israel . shall be |

𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅘𝅥

This measure will rightly take about twice as long to render as a measure with only two syllables.

For two half-notes of the chant, occasionally a dotted half-note and a quarter-note are substituted. The correct rendering of these is not always understood. The rules are as follows:

When they are set to *two* syllables, these should invariably take one note each, *e.g.*,

In the recitation:

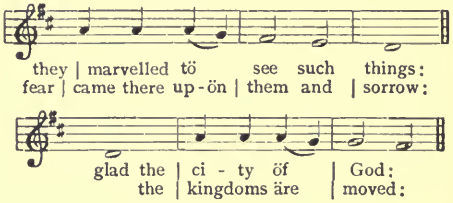
the | Lord of | Hosts is | with us.
be | hold the | works, etc.

In the mediation:

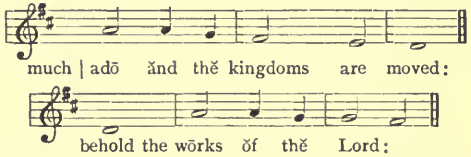
the Lord of | Hosts is | with us.
God is our | hope and | strength.

When, however, *three* syllables are to be taken to the two notes, considerable care is necessary. It should be

first decided whether these syllables can be divided into a long and two shorts, or into two shorts and a long (| — ⌣ ⌣ | or | ⌣ ⌣ — |); *when the latter is necessary, the musical notes must be adapted thus:* ♩ ♩ ♪♪,



In all other cases the rendering will be like this:



When there are four syllables, the rendering will invariably be:

A word should be said as to the mark of division (:) found in all Psalters between the two halves of the verse. This is the one pointing mark which has the authority of the Prayer Book. It is sometimes called a 'colon,' because it is written like one; but this is a pity, as a colon is the name given to a stop in grammar, used to denote a break in the sense. The mark in question simply indicates the division of the music, whether the words have a break or are continuous. Usually, the division of the parallels occurs at this point, but not always. When it does not, the music should continue without any separation; *e.g.*,

O Lord thy word: endureth, etc.

For lo, the kings of the earth: are gathered, etc.

In view of the insistence by some teachers on an invariable pause at this point, as a sort of sacred duty, the following opinion given by the Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D., is valuable:

"I think the pause of the colon in any case is purely for purposes of *convenience*, and must be judged accordingly, not treated as a sort of fetish which must be adhered to with or without cause."

This brings in another question: What is the correct method of antiphonal singing? should it be by the half-verse, or by the whole verse?

Firstly, sweep away misconceptions. There is no absolute authority for the invariable use of either the one or the other. Various methods have been in use at different times and in different places. The question is one that should be settled solely by considerations of common sense, edification and beauty.

Further, there is no reason at all why the whole body of the choir should take part in every verse. It is quite suitable for certain portions to be taken by a solo voice, or by a few picked voices; but this is a question that cannot be fully discussed here.*

Assuming that the chorus is going to sing in every verse, then, in the majority of Psalms, the division should be at the half-verse, in order to make the musical rendering correspond with the structure of the words. For it will be seen that, as a rule, the poetry takes a dual form: the second half of the verse balances the first as a parallel, a complement, or an antithesis. This structure is obscured by the custom of whole-verse singing; it is illuminated by half-verse antiphony.

The rule should be to divide each verse between the two sides of the choir whenever the verses are of twofold construction; but to retain the whole-verse arrangement when the verses contain only one complete and indivisible thought.

* See 'The Psalms, their Structure and Musical Rendering,' by A. Madeley Richardson (G. Schirmer).

The student is strongly recommended to follow up the study of this important question. Space forbids more than a passing reference to it here.

A small detail should be noticed. Sometimes an elaborate *rallentando* is introduced at the end of every 'Gloria.' This should be avoided. A slight slackening may be introduced, but it should be kept well within bounds. It is a pity that the direction of the Prayer Book which orders the 'Gloria' to be sung at the conclusion of every Psalm cannot be amended (as has been done by the American Church); it is particularly inappropriate when, as in several cases, the Psalm already terminates with a 'Gloria' of its own.

Insufficient attention has probably been given to the question of chanting in unison. Unison singing is always effective, as a contrast to harmonized. For chanting with a weak choir, where there may be difficulties in balancing voices, or in getting them to take their parts correctly when balanced, it is strongly to be recommended. Further, when congregational singing is desired, it is the one way to obtain it. Low chants may be taken, suitable to the compass of all voices, and all available time and care given to the correct enunciation of the words, without the hindrance of having to correct faults in part-singing.

Now, after perusing the method of chanting advocated in these pages, the student will probably pause to consider whether he feels equal to the task of carrying it out. The writer has often been told by grave and reverend seigniors that, though his views are undoubtedly right, the difficulties in the way of imparting them to unlearned singers are so great that it is impossible to teach them successfully. The reply to this is, that the difficulties, when boldly attacked, will be found to be purely imaginary. Experience has shown that little boys have been able to acquire the method in a very short time with complete success. This has been done both in England and America. In the latter country it has been remarkable how easily the boys have taken to it in a few months; and it has been amusing and instructive to witness the elder boys solemnly undertaking

to teach the juniors and insisting upon their chanting properly without delay. The method is based upon nature and common sense. When acquired it is seen to be reasonable and obvious. It is the prevalent defective chanting that is really difficult; — obviously, for, to acquire it, it is necessary, having learnt to speak correctly, to unlearn all this and speak incorrectly.

Even were the difficulties great (as they are not), it would be worth while; for it gives to the words meaning, and consequently interest. The words are learnt and retained; their sense is grasped and assimilated. What better task can a choirmaster have than to promote the love and appreciation of the golden beauties of the greatest poetry in the world?

The reader should obtain and study that valuable book (recently published at the price of 1/0) by Prothero, "The Psalms in Human Life." After reading it he will not think any trouble too much to establish the singing of the Psalms as they should be sung.

It should be always emphasized that this method of chanting is nothing new. Its one and only aim is to reëstablish and retain the old principles, the only true and right ones.

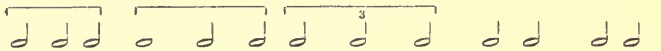
One real difficulty is found when choirs are thoroughly trained into a wrong method. This requires undoing before the right can be established. It will, of course, take trouble to do this, but it is unfair to blame the true for the faults of the false. The undoing process will invariably be found more arduous with men than with boys. This proves what has just been said. It will not be asserted that men have less intelligence than boys. The only reason for this tardiness is that with them bad habits have had longer time to establish themselves and grow into their nature. The faults have become confirmed, and therefore require more time and stronger efforts to eradicate them.

Another difficulty lies in the fact that the usual published Psalters have to be used.* In these the 'accent' is found.

* See, however, The Southwark Psalter, by the present writer (Longmans, Green & Co.).

Its pernicious effect is admitted by all, but a mistaken notion is abroad that in some way it is a help to the singer, and, in fact, is an inevitable evil. Attempts have been made to lessen its baneful influence by substituting for it quantity-marks, or superimposed notes. These only retain the same errors in a different form. The fatal mistake of all is the assumption of what is called an 'imaginary bar.' Away with it! Why have a bar at all, either imaginary or otherwise? The evil effect would not be so great if we could have 'imaginary bars' all through a long sentence, thus:

a. Bléssed is hé whose unríghteousness | is for- | gíven:



b. Blessed is he whose unrighteousness | is for- | given:

c. Blĕssĕd ĭs hē whŏse ŭnrīghtĕousnĕss | ĭs fŏr- | gĭvĕn:

but none of these arrangements has ever been attempted. Only the last group of syllables before the first bar is marked. The inevitable consequence is that both teacher and singers conclude that these are the ones to be chiefly considered, and that the preceding ones are of less importance. In the above sentence, the principal word is 'blessed'; the next in importance, 'forgiven.' What uninitiated person would suppose so, looking at the ordinary Psalters? Let us hope that the time is not far distant when all these devices will, once for all, be removed from all Psalters. Until they are, the only advice that can be given is carefully and systematically to *disregard them*, and chant in accordance with the dictates of grammar and common sense.

CHAPTER VII

MERBECKE'S COMMUNION SERVICE

In the treasury of English Church music are two notable Communion Services, which have come down from the early Reformation days of the sixteenth century — those by Merbecke and Tallis. After that time the custom of singing the Communion Service was discontinued in Parish Churches, while in Cathedrals only the first part of the service was sung. This state of things continued until the nineteenth century, and the result is that to-day there are available, of the period to which they belong, only the two works above mentioned.

The former is written in unison throughout, on the lines of the old plain-song; the latter is in modal harmony, on the lines of Tallis's celebrated Responses, of which it forms the continuation.

Merbecke's Service contains all the parts that are now used, including the Benedictus and Agnus Dei; Tallis's is complete except for these two portions.

All choirs that have to sing in a choral celebration of the Holy Communion should be familiar with Merbecke; it is suitable and effective for every place, from the stately Cathedral to the humble village church. Tallis can be adequately rendered only by the trained and balanced choirs of Cathedrals and large parish churches. In them it should be constantly heard.

The reader's attention is now called to the consideration of Merbecke. This Service has of recent years been revived, and has come into very general use. Its full appreciation has, however, been retarded by misconceptions as to what it really is. Editions of the music have been published in which the original has been altered almost beyond recognition. The time has been changed from its own free rhythm to the strict quadruple time so dear to some modern ears.

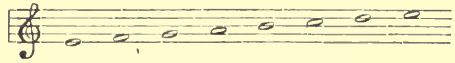
Harmonies have been added, including dominant and diminished sevenths, and other devices contrary to the spirit and use of the time in which it was written. The result has been unsatisfactory to all. Musicians with the historical spirit have shuddered at the anachronisms thus perpetrated; thorough-going moderns have naturally been repelled by the juxtaposition of the cadence without a leading-note and their favorite chromatic harmonies.

To appreciate the beauties of Merbecke it is necessary to revert to the original, to study and understand its spirit, and to render it in the manner intended by its author.

On examining the original, we see that it consists of musical sentences written in what may be called a kind of musical prose, in free rhythm, more allied to chanting than to modern barred music, but lacking the presence of the characteristic 'reciting-note.'

The tonality used for the fixed portions of the Service is that of the Dorian, Phrygian, Æolian and Ionian modes. The first:

is used for the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei; the second:



for the Gloria in Excelsis; the third:

for the Creed; and the last:

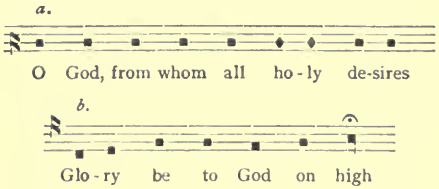
for the Kyrie.

For the Offertory Sentences and the Post-Communions other modes are also employed.

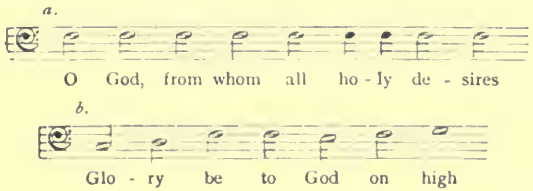
All indications as to the manner of rendering are absent. There is no guide as to absolute pitch: the old four-line *C*- and *F*-clefs are used, which are no more a guide to absolute pitch than are the syllables of the Tonic Sol-Fa method.

There is little, or no, guide to the relative length of the notes; the four kinds of notes used give only a vague suggestion as to relative time. There is no direction as to pace; though of course no one will suppose that it is intended that everything shall be sung at the same pace, regardless of the character of the words. There is no direction as to variation of tone, though this must have been supplied by the singers of the time. All that is given is simply notes indicating variations in relative pitch.

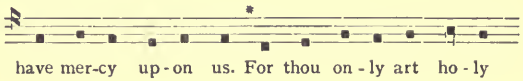
On examining the music carefully, in the light of recent research, it is impossible to come to the conclusion that the composer intended it to be sung with any strict grouping as to time. The notes employed are the old square notes; and they are used for the sung portions in exactly the same way as for the monotoned part of the service; *e.g.*,



The proper way to interpret the music is to consider how the various phrases would be rendered as a monotone, and then to carry the spirit of this rendering into the inflexion. The student may convince himself of this by comparing the two illustrations just given. It is evident that, whatever be the solution of the problem, the manner of rendering the two is practically the same; what applies to the one will apply to the other. If the first is to be taken in the manner of modern measured music, then the second must be taken in the same manner, thus:



If the student reads the first of the above exactly as it is written, he will find the result quite impossible, quite contrary to all principles of elocution. There can be no doubt that at *a* the notes are to be treated freely, merely as signs to guide the pitch. This being admitted, a strong presumption follows that *b* is to be taken in a corresponding way. For practical use this presumption may be treated as a certainty. The question next arises: What is the object of having notes differing in shape? The intention seems to be that the breves shall have more weight than the semibreves, and the latter more than the minims. But even this does not always seem a sure guide; at least, in many places where there must obviously be a pause, the stronger note is not used; *e.g.*, in



a pause is undoubtedly intended at (*), but there is nothing to indicate it. Bearing upon this it is curious to note that the composer was not always accurate in details. In the Creed a whole sentence has got transposed; in the Offertory Sentences there are three mistakes of reference. It seems as if general effects, rather than details, had been considered in the compilation of the music.

Assuming that all that is handed down to us from Merbecke is the mere relative pitch of the notes, it remains for the modern adapter to supply (1) relative time, (2) pace, (3) absolute pitch, (4) accent, (5) phrasing, (6) expression, (7) instrumental (or even vocal) harmony (if desired).

Although so many modern editions have already been published, it is perhaps unnecessary for the present writer to offer an apology for suggesting yet another reading; for, in a subject so abstruse and so elusive, there is always room for differences of opinion as to details.*

The various parts, or movements, that appear in the Merbecke setting are as follows:

*See Merbecke's Communion Service, edited by A. Madeley Richardson. (G. Schirmer.)

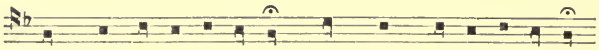
1. The Introit.
2. The Kyrie.
3. The Gloria in Excelsis.
4. The Creed.
5. The Offertories.
6. The Sanctus (including the Benedictus).
7. The Pater Noster.
8. The Agnus Dei.
9. The Post-Communions.

1. *The Introit* consists of a Psalm setting; the first verse is given, with a direction to continue in the same manner to the end.

2. *The Kyrie.* The setting here given should be carefully distinguished from what is now known as the Kyrie. What Merbecke set was the proper Kyrie, or Lesser Litany; this is now omitted from the English Communion Service, and its place supplied by the Responses to the Commandments. It should be noted, however, that in the American Church the proper Kyrie has been retained, so that there Merbecke's music can be rendered as set. It seems to be a prevalent custom in the English Church to sing the Responses to the Commandments, in places where little else is sung. This is remarkable, for if there is one place in the Church Service where singing would seem inappropriate, it is here. The Commandments and these Responses are outside the service proper, and stand for the solemn self-examination and preparation of the worshipper for the service that follows. They were inserted to supply the place of the auricular confession which was compulsory before the Reformation. To sing here is a custom that could scarcely be defended. The only excuse for it is that it has been done, and is being done, and will probably continue to be done by a great many people.

It is suggested that this section should not be *sung*, but *said* on a low monotone. When this is done, the final Response may be sung, though this is not at all necessary. At any rate, it would relieve the singers of the wearisome repetition of the same phrase nine times over, and from intruding so much singing into a place where it is not wanted.

The Kyrie given by Merbecke is as follows:

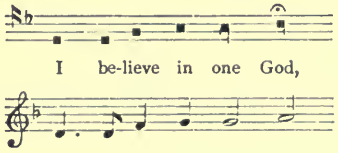


If it is desired that the Responses to the Commandments be sung, a setting may be supplied, not by adding an ending to the first Merbecke phrase and repeating it nine times, but by doing this for all three phrases, which can then be sung three times each, with a final setting for the 10th. The following arrangement is suggested for use:

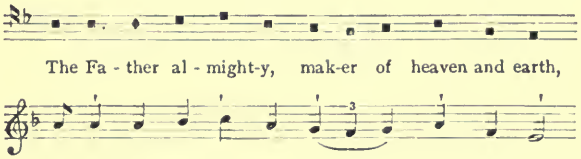
a.
Lord, have mer-cy up-on us, and in-cline our hearts to keep this law.
b.
Lord, have mer-cy up-on us, and in-cline our hearts to keep this law.
c.
Lord, have mer-cy up-on us, and in-cline our hearts to keep this law.
d.
Lord, have mer-cy up-on us, and write all these thy laws in
our hearts, we be-seech thee.

In the English Church Service the Creed comes next in order, though in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI it followed the Gloria in Excelsis. As already indicated, the four kinds of notes are used, but they cannot be taken as a guide. The pause is used for the opening phrase, and for the four concluding phrases. At no other place is there any indication of a break at all; pauses must obviously be supplied. The breve is occasionally used, but generally when it does not seem to be required. The usual note is the semibreve, varied by a few minims.

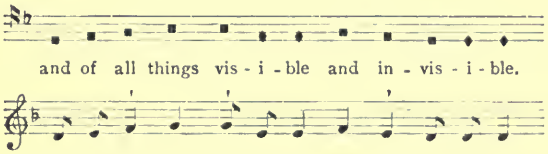
Here is the setting, with a suggested interpretation in modern notes, intended as an *approximate* guide.



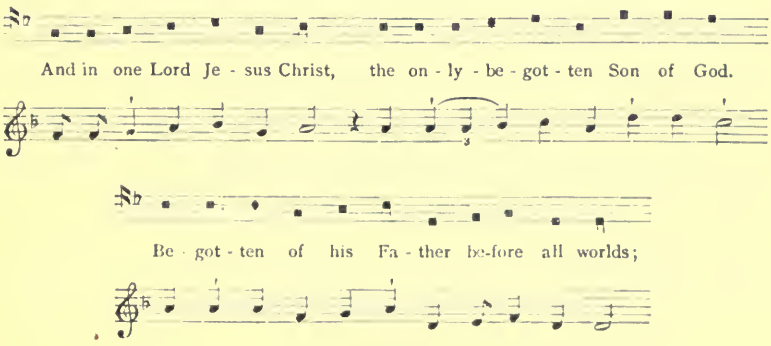
In the original no mention is made of this being taken by the priest alone, although that custom is now usual.

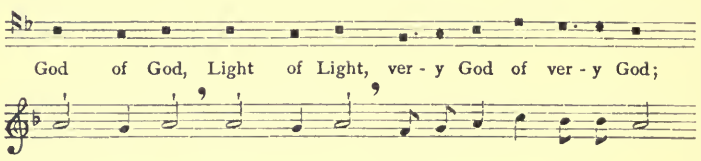


In a modern Prayer Book each new clause of the Creed is printed with a capital; in the Merbecke setting even this guide to rendering does not appear. Notice, above, the dotted semibreve, and its interpretation.

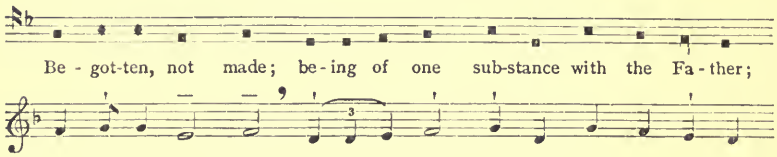


Here minims are used, but they fall on the wrong syllables.

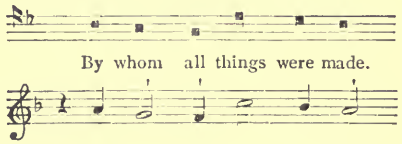




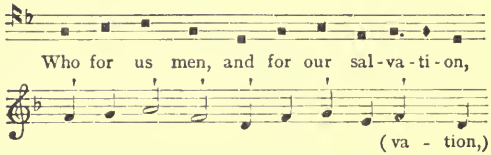
Here time is freely adapted to verbal requirements. It is sometimes asserted that the word 'of' should here be emphasized to show that it translates the Latin *de* with the ablative (*Deum de Deo*), not the genitive; but it is not necessary to alter the natural grammatical pronunciation. If the first syllable of 'very' were to be made long, as in Merbecke, the effect would be unpleasant.



The second clause here should be sung freely; 'being of' rather slower than written, 'with the' rather faster. The breve for 'Father' seems unnecessary.

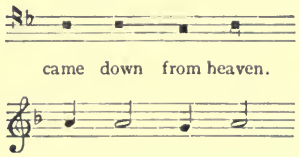


'Whom' requires a long note; 'all' is emphatic, though 'things' is longer. The rendering commonly heard states, by implication, the heresy that the Creator made things, but not persons.

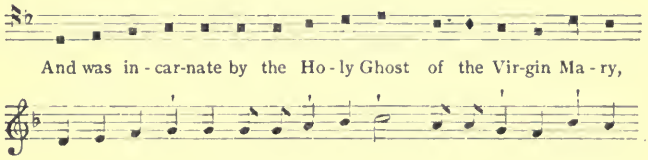


'Us men' are both long and emphatic, the preceding words being also deliberate; the rest of the words are equal

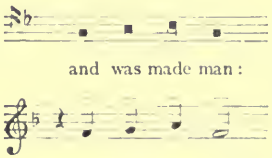
in length. Notice the curious division in Merbecke of the word 'salvation' into four syllables.



The first two words are emphatic — equally so. If one is emphasized beyond the other the sense is altered. The preposition 'from' does not require so long a note, though Merbecke has given one; its shortening, correctly, has the effect of lengthening the preceding note.



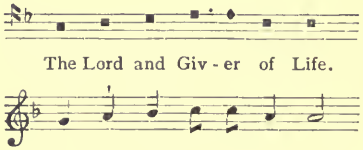
This phrase has required some bending to fit the words. 'By' and 'the,' preposition and article, should be kept out of prominence; and also 'of the.' Then the principal words 'incarnate,' 'Holy Ghost,' 'Virgin Mary,' will be heard with their full meaning. Merbecke's long note for the first syllable of 'Mary' is unnecessary; still more the one for 'of.'



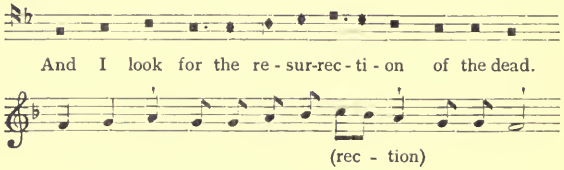
These should be sung in equal time, slowly and solemnly. The apparently long note for 'made' is out of place, and would spoil the phrase.

We will pass over most of the remaining clauses of the Creed, leaving the student to work them out for himself in a similar way. A few points may be noticed.

It is curious here that a long note should be given to 'sit-,' which is obviously short. 'Of the' clearly require shortening. The first syllable of 'Father' should not be over-prolonged.



Here, clearly, 'Giv-' should be short; 'Life,' long.



Here the preposition and conjunction are not to be prolonged; neither will the third syllable of 'resurrection' bear lengthening.

The Sanctus

This has been harmonized in the Æolian mode; it is written, as a matter of fact, in the Dorian. The pace should be slow and solemn at the commencement, brightening for the second clause. 'Holy' should be rendered Hōlў at each repetition.

The second clause has met with remarkable distortion in one well-known edition. It stands thus in the original:

and should probably take the following rhythm:

It will be remembered that in the original setting the Santus and the Benedictus form one movement.

The Benedictus has met with similar distortion; it should be taken in the rhythm demanded by the words.

The Agnus Dei

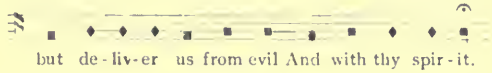
is also in the Dorian mode, with major sixth and minor seventh. Its usual harmonization in the Æolian mode greatly changes its character. It should be sung very quietly and smoothly, and is best taken by men's voices and trebles alternately, with the final clause, 'grant us thy peace,' full. In the original there is again the mistaken emphasis on the conjunction:

which will be corrected.

The Paternoster

This is in the Hypo-Æolian mode. The melody set to the words of the 'Our Father' as found in Merbecke is only part of a longer portion of the Service; and, taken from its context, gives a tune without beginning and without end. A reference to the original shows this. The melody commences thus:

out of which all the rest proceeds. The ending is thus:

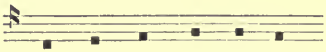


This is the conclusion of the inflected part. After it the service proceeds on monotone, therefore the end should be retained. The Doxology, although used to-day, does not find a place in the First Prayer Book at this point. It has to be added. It should, of course, end with the proper cadence of the mode, so following the original.

The Paternoster is best sung in unison, with a light organ accompaniment. It should be taken, not slowly, but very softly and sustained, like a monotone, with the inflexions subdued and the rhythm perfectly free.

The Gloria in Excelsis

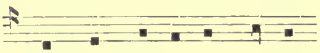
This is in the Phrygian mode; it has been wrongly harmonized as if it were in a modern major key. The stress of the following may be noticed:



where the chief weight should, of course, be given to 'Lord'; it is usually given to 'O.'

Again, at

the stress should be on 'right,' not 'hand.' — At



it should be on 'thou,' not on 'for.' Next, it should be on 'only,'

All these should be sung in the *legato* style, with steady, even vowel-tone.

As in the original, unison singing should be employed, but unison is most effective when it is pure unison, not octaves; therefore, when possible, the phrases may be taken alternately by men and boys (or women).

At the end of every phrase there should be a slight suggestion of a *rallentando* and *diminuendo*; this should be so little as to be hardly perceptible.

More than half of Merbecke's Communion Service consists of the fifteen Offertory Sentences and the sixteen Post-Communions. These are beautiful specimens of plain-song, specially written for the English Service, and may well be revived. They are at present almost unknown. The former will, of course, be sung at the proper place in the service; the latter were intended to be sung after the Communion, just before the Paternoster. They are short settings of passages of Scripture. As it is legal to use a hymn at this place, *a fortiori* these may be inserted; they are also suitable for use at the conclusion of the whole service. They may be taken either in chorus or as solos.

CHAPTER VIII

FURTHER DIRECTIONS

Before proceeding with service music, it will be well to pause here to take up some further considerations as to training and management.

Men and boys, as already mentioned, should be trained separately. The boys should practise if possible every day, for about an hour. It is well not to exceed this limit, though boys in good training can continue for much longer without fatigue.

The men should practise separately once a week, and also in conjunction with the boys.

All technical details should be mastered both by the men and by the boys at the separate practices; at the united or 'full' practice finishing touches should be applied. Balance, blend and unity will here be considered; the time for learning details will be past.

The full practice should be conducted without accompaniment; by this plan alone can the highest standard be attained. If there is difficulty at first in singing unaccompanied, a small pianoforte may be placed in the centre of

the chancel and touched occasionally by the choirmaster, to give the pitch, but on no account should the organ be used for a full practice. The only result of its use will be to obscure defects, teach the choir to lean upon its support, and hinder the choirmaster in his duties.

No choir should be considered efficient, or regarded as knowing its work, until it can sing every note of the service music without accompaniment. The difference between a choir that has practised in this way and one accustomed to relying upon constant accompaniment is marked and unmistakable, and it is astonishing to find out how often the wrong method is followed in cases where the other could easily be introduced. Many choirmasters are deterred from trying the unaccompanied plan by fear of its difficulty. The difficulties are only at the outset, when establishing the custom; they will quickly disappear. For twelve years the writer conducted the rehearsals of the late choir of Southwark Cathedral with no support beyond a tuning-fork; he can, therefore, speak from personal experience. At the commencement this choir was formed from material in no way superior to what may be obtained anywhere; it was the unaccompanied practice that gave them their efficiency.

We have considered fully the early training of junior boys; now is the time to go further and lay down plans for developing the same.

Order, method, precision, should everywhere prevail. Every moment of the time should be used to the best advantage. Here is a plan for the conduct of a practice with senior boys:

1. Exercises.
2. Hymns.
3. Exercises.
4. Psalms.
5. Exercises.
6. Service.
7. Exercises.
8. Anthem.
9. Exercises.

Etc., etc.

Commence with exercises, then give out the next item, whatever it is; immediately start another exercise, mentioning the number; have no pause, but let the singing be continuous from beginning to end. When giving a direction or correcting a mistake, use the fewest and clearest words possible.

For singing measured music it is very essential that the boys should learn to beat time. It will take a little trouble to teach them at first, but, once the habit is acquired, it will be of the greatest assistance in facilitating progress, learning new music, and securing accuracy. The best plan is to teach the three simple varieties of time beating, viz.

Duple (down, up) (*a*).
Triple (down, left, up) (*b*).
Quadruple (down, left, right, up) (*c*).

For compound time, two of these may be combined. Although this is not strictly accurate from the conductor's standpoint, it answers the purpose here perfectly well, and will save much time and trouble. For compound triple the plan will be:

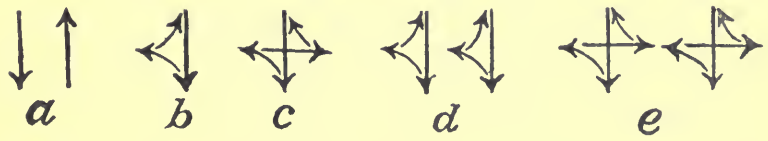
Down, left, up, down, left, up (*d*).

explaining that the first accent will be slightly more pronounced than the second.

For compound quadruple it will be:

Down, left, right, up, down, left, right, up (*e*).

This latter is not often wanted, but is occasionally necessary for very slow quadruple, as for instance, in some of Handel's choruses.



In learning new music, the things to acquire at the outset are the time and the pitch. Sight-reading consists of the power of associating the appearance with the sound, and

it is gained by constant attention and practice. The time-beating will help greatly; it will make the rhythm at once present itself, and then the pitch will easily follow.

In learning a new piece, the best plan is first to go right through it at its proper pace, insisting upon time-beating. This will give a general idea. Do not, at first, trouble about details; there will be plenty of time for them later on. After some progress has been made in this way, pick out the most serious mistakes and correct them with minute care; but avoid the wearisome repetition of a whole passage when there may perhaps be only one wrong note in it. Reduce the area of correction to its narrowest limits. If there is one note only, an awkward interval, a sharp or a flat misplaced, sing that and nothing else, and then, when it is familiar, fit it in to its surroundings.

Two things to make sure of are

a. Beginnings, and
b. Endings.

Insist that every voice sing every lead. When there is hesitation, stop and try the weak note first, quietly, perhaps humming; then, with the time-beating, fit it on to its exact moment of time.

With regard to endings, before securing precision in them it is necessary to decide the exact moment at which they should occur, *i.e.*, when *silence is to commence.* This is important. How many otherwise good renderings are spoilt by a shabby ending! Endings should be clear cut and prompt, just as beginnings are; but they cannot be until we know where to end.

This is the way. Consider the length of the written note — quarter, half, or whole note: one beat, two beats, three, or four; then direct that, if the word to be sung ends with a vowel, silence commences on the beat following the full number belonging to the written note; for instance:

(one, two, three, four) silence.

If, however, the word ends with a consonant, that consonant should be sounded, not on the last beat of the written note, but on the first one following; thus:

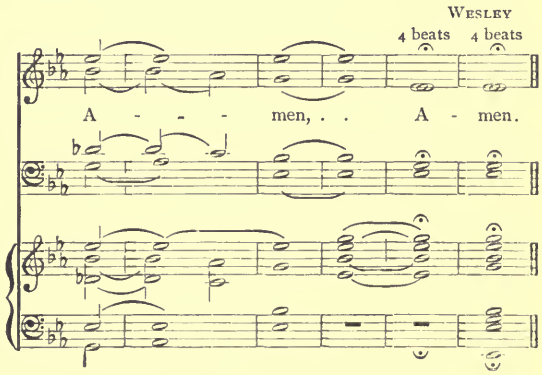
(one, two, three, four) consonant

The use of this system will be found of great advantage, and it will make easy an otherwise really difficult matter. It will probably be new to most readers. They should think it over and experiment with it until quite convinced of its utility before using it. It is clear that the note should be held the written length; it is clear that the word must be sounded distinctly; it is clear that the singers must do this together. The given note represents the musical sound; the consonant is not music, but noise.

If, however, it should be thought that this plan allows more time than is correct, ask the question, What alternative is there? If the consonant does not come at this point, where shall it come? In quick time the question might be evaded without a very noticeable result. But supposing the pace to be very slow, and the last beat of the note to take quite a long time, the consonant cannot come *on* that beat, as in that case there would be a marked interval of silence.

But if it is to come somewhere between this beat and the next, then no two singers will agree as to where exactly they are to place it, and the result will be confusion and disorder. As a matter of fact, the knot is usually cut in the case of the average singer by omitting the consonant. But no reader of these pages will allow such a blunder of mispronunciation. Therefore, as no reasonable alternative presents itself, we return to the rule given first and obtain distinctness, accuracy and precision.

In connection with endings the question of pauses must be considered. These are one of the most tiresome things the choirmaster has to deal with. He must insist on perfect distinctness of the consonants, and on having all the voices cease at the same moment; how is he to secure this when a pause is placed over a note, with no means of discovering for exactly how long it is intended to extend the sound? When a conductor is using his bâton and the singers are watching him, there is, of course, no difficulty. But when there is no conductor, and the singers have to be responsible each for himself, what is to be done? The only way out of the dilemma is for the choirmaster to go through the music carefully beforehand, and decide for how long he would probably keep his bâton poised if conducting the voices; and then to write an equivalent number of beats over the note in question. These will be counted strictly by the singers as if there were no pause at all, and precision and unanimity will be secured; *e.g.*,



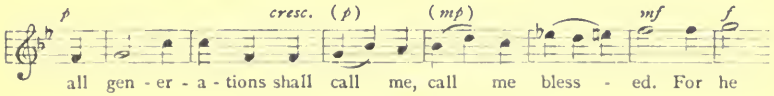
CHAPTER IX

ACCURACY AND EXPRESSION

When correct beginnings and correct endings have been secured, a good advance will have been made towards accuracy.

The signs for *crescendo* and *diminuendo* are frequently misunderstood. Even good singers will make a strong increase of tone directly they see the first, and the opposite with the second; instead of a true *crescendo* will be given a *forte;* instead of *diminuendo*, a *piano.* It is helpful to give a simple rule that *crescendo* should be translated 'loud later on,' *diminuendo*, 'soft later on.' One of the most enchanting effects of choral music is the use of the true *crescendo* or *diminuendo.* The imperceptible increase and decrease of tone, so cunningly contrived that the hearer is unconscious as to when it takes place, and finds that the music has become louder or softer, so to speak, by stealth — to accomplish this is one of the masterstrokes of a first-rate choir.

For the early stages, to acquire this art-device it is useful to divide up the distance between the soft and loud into distinct stages, passing gradually through assumed points of *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*. Some or all of these signs may be marked in the music, and will greatly assist in riveting the singer's attention on what he is aiming at. Illustration:

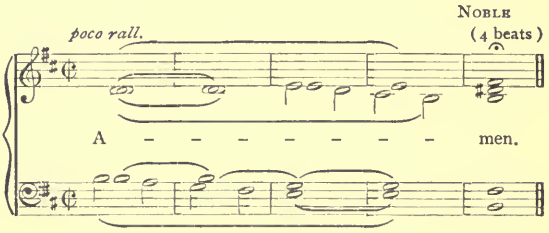


The interpretation marks *added* to the above are enclosed in brackets.

The same principles should be applied to *rallentandi* and *accelerandi.* These are frequently too sudden and too pronounced. When the composer directs that the music

shall become *gradually* slower, he does not mean that it is to be *suddenly* slower; nor does he, of necessity, mean that the retarding is to be very great. The *rallentando* should be introduced on the same plan as the *crescendo*, imperceptibly, gradually stealing upon the ear, not obtruding itself. It is useful to make a rule that the slackening or quickening of the time should never go further than the doubling or halving of the original pace, seldom so far. Some changes of pace should be very slight. The caricatures often introduced by choirs are enough to make a person of taste almost wish that all signs of change of pace could be removed from printed music.

Illustration:



In the above extract very little slackening should take place before the third measure; and it should not be evident until the fourth. If the pause were marked with the figure 4 and sung to exactly four beats, the composer's intentions would probably be carried out.

All the above bears upon accuracy. Following this comes expression. What exactly is expression? First, it includes the observance of the composer's indications for the interpretation; but there is something more. Accuracy gives the inanimate body; expression, the life and soul.

This is a difficult and elusive subject to deal with. It is easier to feel than to describe. The difference between true expression and bare accuracy is the difference between art and artificiality. The producer of the first is an artist, of the second, an artisan.

The performer of music should treat each of his notes with the loving care shown by a great poet for words, and

by a great architect for stones. I know of no better or more suggestive guide to the acquiring of the spirit of expression than Ruskin's chapter on 'The Lamp of Life' in 'The Seven Lamps of Architecture,' and would suggest its careful study by the choirmaster. "I said," he writes, "that hand-work might always be known from machine-work; observing, however, at the same time, that it was possible for men to turn themselves into machines, and to reduce their labour to the machine level; but so long as men work *as* men, putting their heart into what they do, and doing their best, there will be that in the handling which will be above all price: it will be plainly seen that some places have been delighted in more than others — that there have been a pause, and a care about them; and then there will come careless bits, and fast bits; and here the chisel will have struck hard, and there lightly, and anon timidly; and if the man's mind as well as his heart went with his work, all this will be in the right places, and each part will set off the other; and the effect of the whole, as compared with the same design cut by a machine or a lifeless hand, will be like that of poetry well read and deeply felt to that of the same verses jangled by rote. There are many to whom the difference is imperceptible; but to those who love poetry it is everything — they had rather not hear it at all, than hear it ill read; and to those who love Architecture, the life and accent of the hand are everything. They had rather not have ornament at all, than see it ill cut — deadly cut, that is. I cannot too often repeat, it is not coarse cutting, it is not blunt cutting, that is necessarily bad; but it is cold cutting — the look of equal trouble everywhere — the smooth, diffused tranquility of heartless pains — the regularity of a plough in a level field."

By analogy this teaches us that in music things nominally the same should not be so actually. It is the teaching of Nature, who in all her things of beauty never gives us two that are identical in every respect. Applying this to music, a group of notes that look the same on paper should not, in performance, be actually identical in length

and force; which means that, having acquired formal accuracy by practice, we must finally depart from it, in order to obtain life. In what way, and to what extent, shall this be done? and how can we be guided? In vocal music the answer is simple. The words must guide. In any given sentence the words are never all equal in force and importance. If the singer feels their meaning as he uses them, he will instinctively form his notes accordingly; he will dwell here, and hasten there; he will emphasize this note, and pass lightly over that one; the meaning will shine through, and the illumination will be that of the Lamp of Life.

CHAPTER X

HYMNS

From some points of view the metrical hymn is the choirmaster's great opportunity. Here he can appeal to the multitude, musical and unmusical. The hymn is the one popular part of the service, appreciated by all and loved by all. Singularly enough, with the one exception of the Veni Creator, there is no provision in the present Prayer Book for metrical hymns, though before the Reformation the Office Hymn was an important part of regular worship. The hymn has, however, by the weight of its own merits, forced its way into the forefront of modern Church worship, and there it holds a place of first importance and exercises a unique influence.

Hymn-tunes may be divided into four classes:

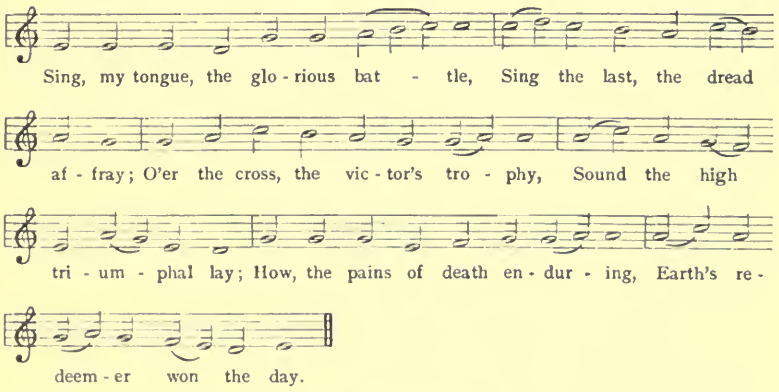
1. Plain-song.
2. Old Chorales (German and English).
3. The modern descendent of the same.
4. The modern Developed Tune.

1. Plain-Song

Strong efforts are being made in many directions to restore the old plain-song tunes to their rightful place. These efforts will have greater results as the proper manner of rendering the music becomes more widely known. To gain a thorough knowledge of their correct interpretation, the reader is recommended to study carefully Helmore's valuable "Primer of Plainsong" (Novello & Co.). This book is crammed with information upon choir work in general, besides that bearing upon its special subject.

Plain-song tunes are frequently rendered by inexpert choirs in far too heavy, stiff, and laboured a manner. The pace is generally too slow, the length of the notes is seldom properly adjusted to the words, the accent, when applied, is usually too forcible.

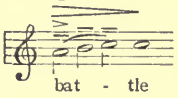
In the following well-known and beautiful hymn


Sing, my tongue, the glo - rious bat - tle, Sing the last, the dread
af - fray; O'er the cross, the vic - tor's tro - phy, Sound the high
tri - um - phal lay; How, the pains of death en - dur - ing, Earth's re -
deem - er won the day.

the first words will be rendered thus:

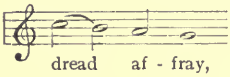
'Sing' — dwell upon this.
'my' — not so long.
'tongue' — long, with less accent than 'sing.'
'the' — short.
'glorious' — first syllable very full; the second and third as one — r'oús.'

'battle' — three notes to a short vowel. These three are sometimes too hurried; give a pressure upon each, with a little more weight to the first than to the others. The last note is unaccented.



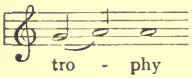
Here the accent is on the first note, though often wrongly placed on the second.

'the' — very light.
'last' — sustained.



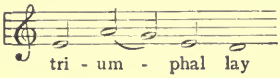
shading off at the end of the phrase.

'o'er' — long vowel.
'the' — short.
'cross' — the important word.
'victor's' — sound the consonants distinctly.

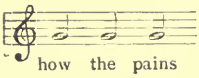


as before, the accent on the first note.

These notes must not be pushed into one another — a common fault.



The first syllable heavy; press upon the second; the last word with good vowel-tone.

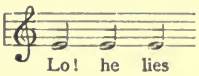


These three notes will all have their characteristic tone, heavy — light — very heavy.

The second syllable requires care; it has the compound vowel ĭ + o͞o; the second part takes the tone.

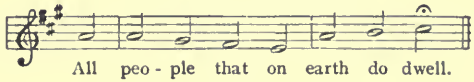
These three groups as before, very smooth; the first note slightly stronger then the second.

In the fifth verse these three words will attract special tone.



It is hoped that these remarks will give some idea as to how to think of, and how to direct, plain-song tunes. As with other plain-song, the hymn-tunes are more effective when sung alternately by upper and lower voices than when sung by all together in octaves. Lightness and flexibility are the elements that give charm to this music; without them it sounds dull and unattractive.

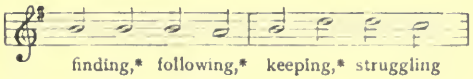
2. Old Chorales



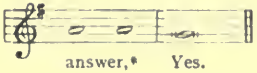
The rendering of hymns of this kind should be massive and heavy, as distinguished from the light rendering of plain-song.

It is customary to make a pause at the end of every line. If it is understood that this is to be the exact length of two beats, unanimity will be secured.

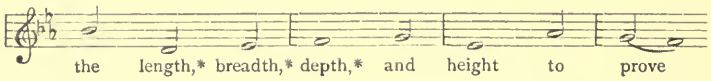
The phrasing must be carefully attended to. A word as to this will be helpful. Vocal phrasing in a general way corresponds with breath-taking, but the two are not identical; all breath-taking introduces phrasing, but all phrasing does not necessitate breath-taking. Sometimes a phrase inconveniently long must, if possible, be taken in one breath (as, for instance, the long passage to 'joy' in the final chorus of Wesley's "Wilderness"), to avoid a break in the sense. At other places, where no breath is required, a break in the continuity must be made in order to bring out the sense. This is the case when a word, or group of words, contains a distinct and separate thought; *e.g.*,



and again:

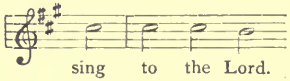


or this:



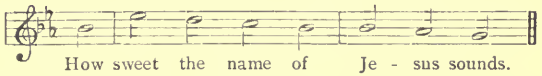
Places like these are unmistakable, and the most living results are produced when a choir is so intent upon the words it is singing that it makes the breaks without special directions. With beginners, however, it is well to place a mark in the books against very important cases.

To return to the hymn we were considering; — in the second line occurs

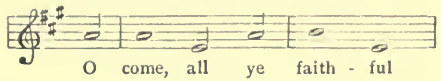


The *musical* accent falls upon the second note, the *verbal* upon the first. The direction should unhesitatingly be given to hold to the latter at the expense of the former. A simple working direction is contained in the formula: *Words first; music second.*

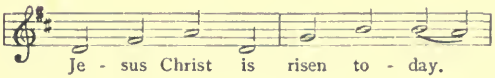
3. Modern Chorales



The above should be taken at a moderate pace, neither slow nor quick. Choice of pace is an important element in hymn singing, and is little understood by many teachers. The writer has known of a case where the rule was in force that every hymn used as a 'processional' should be sung at a certain fixed metronome rate! This was, of course, as much a barbarism as to say that all anthems were to be sung at the same pace. Every hymn has its own pace, governed partly by the date and style of the music, and partly by the sense and emotion of the words. Speaking generally, old chorales should be slow and stately; penitential and mourning hymns should be slow and sustained. Modern developed tunes usually demand a quicker pace; jubilant words sometimes, but not always, suggest the same. Instances of jubilant words sung slowly are

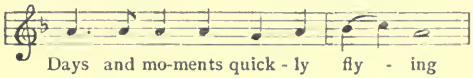


and



These are sometimes taken much too quickly.

The following is an instance of the contrary:



This is generally taken much too slowly.

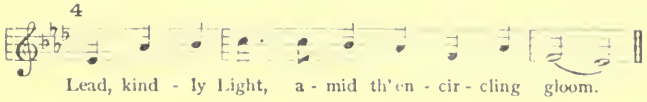
In the hymn we are considering, a remarkable case for phrasing occurs in the fourth verse, and it should be rendered thus:

Jesus, * my Shepherd, * Husband, * Friend, *
My Prophet, * Priest and King, *
My Lord, * my Life,* my Way, * my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

In rendering this the music will accommodate itself to the words, and take longer to sing than an ordinary verse.

In the modern long metre it is a good rule to make the last note of every second line twice as long as written. There must be some kind of pause, and this rule will enable the singers to gain unanimity; *e.g.*,

4. Developed Tunes



Used and spoken of as a hymn-tune, the above is really written in the style of an anthem or part-song. Its adequate rendering requires balance of voices, equal attention to every part, and considerable finish. This brings in the question of congregational singing — an important matter for the choirmaster. The demand to-day is for more and better congregational singing. This demand is a right one, and should be met.

But hymns of this sort are quite unsuitable for a congregation. The ordinary untrained member seldom gets even the melody correctly; but even when this is achieved, the effect is spoilt, since the doubling of the upper part in octaves means the obscuring of the others, and so the marring of the harmony. A hymn of this kind ought to be sung by the choir alone. For congregational singing we need plain, simple melodies that are complete in themselves without vocal harmony. Of course, the ideal tunes for this purpose are the old plain-song compositions, but we need not stop at them. Harmony, and part-singing, have become a fetish to-day; for there are some people so obsessed by them as to seem unable to appreciate the fine effect of good unison singing.

The writer would make the following suggestions for the consideration of choirmasters:

1. That when tunes suitable for unison singing are employed, they should be so sung.

2. That when this is done, variety may be obtained by alternating men's voices with trebles.

3. That in the case of a long hymn, interesting and beautiful effects could be obtained by arranging for certain verses to be sung in unison by the whole body of worshippers, alternating with harmonized verses by the choir.

4. That, further, certain verses might even be taken as solos or quartets. This device has been regarded as a useful spiritual agency; witness the revival singing of Moody and Sankey, in which it was so largely employed. It is also used in many churches at present when singing Litany hymns; — why not in other cases?

5. That when a striking refrain occurs at the end of every verse, this might be taken in a marked way by choir and congregation. There is scope for grand effects here.

Three points remain, in connection with hymn singing, of vital importance. Our hymn singing should be a reality; to make it so, we should abolish all shams and pretences. The ones I am going to mention seem to have taken deep root in many directions. It is to be hoped that earnest choirmasters will unite their efforts to dislodge them.

a. The custom of 'playing over' the tune before commencing to sing; this concerns the organist rather than the choir, but as they are frequently one and the same person I may here bring it forward. This tiresome and unnecessary device has no authority, and is meaningless, superfluous and irritating.

To retain it is as unreasonable as it would be to revive the antiquated custom of the singers' stopping after each line of the hymn while the clerk read out the following words. It implies that the singers do not know the music, and that they are expected to pick it up by ear at the last moment. As a matter of fact, nine-tenths of the tunes used in our services are well known to every one, so that neither the people nor the choir need this belated attempt at instruction. It is obviously a modern innovation, for, during the early centuries of the Christian era before organs were generally employed, it could not have been used; and to-day it is never found necessary when singing takes place in a building possessing no instrument. If it be contended that people require time to find the place in their books — which is not obvious; for when a hymn board is exhibited in a conspicuous place they can always be ready in time — but if that be contended, the proper thing would be to play a suitable introduction on the organ, in keeping with the character of the following music. In a few cases in our hymn-books such introductions are already provided; they ought to become general.

If the custom of 'playing over' could be abolished, an excrescence would be removed from our services, and there would be gain in promptness, spontaneity and reality.

b. Another mistake is the adding of 'Amen' at the end of hymns where it is obviously out of place.

It is not generally known that this custom has gradually crept in during the last fifty years, and was unknown before then. The meaning of 'Amen' is 'so be it,' or 'verily'; and it is a solemn asseveration used with ritual significance at certain parts of the service. It is an integral part of the Gloria Patri; it is used as the answer of the people to the prayer said by the priest. To employ it as an appendage to hymns where it can have no possible meaning is surely a violation of the Apostle's injunction, 'let all things be done decently and in order.'

A glance at the Prayer Book will show at once that it is a necessary adjunct neither to a hymn of praise nor to a prayer; *e.g.*, the word occurs neither at the end of the Te Deum, the greatest of all hymns, nor at the end of the petitions of the Litany, nor of the numberless petitions and ejaculations throughout the Prayer Book in which priest and people join.

Hymns may be grouped into songs of praise, prayers, pious aspiration, and statements of fact. In the first two the 'Amen' is unnecessary; in the second two it is out of place; *e.g.*,

> Hark, the herald angels sing,
> Glory to the new-born King.

This is an exhortation to listen to the angels' song.

> With the saints hereafter we
> Hope to bear the palm.

This is an expression of a hope.

> Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night.

This is a poetical statement.

> When shall I be,
> My God, with thee
> To see thy face?

This is a question.

But the list might be extended indefinitely. It is clear that if we insert the word 'Amen' at any of these places, we can be attaching no meaning to it, and shall therefore be violating a great principle of worship.

The correct use is to retain the word at the conclusion of every versified 'Gloria'; to expunge it from all other places in the hymn-book.

In this connection the opinion of the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford (Dr. Strong), is of value: "In making the Oxford Hymn Book," the Dean writes, "we followed the precedent of the book which is used in the University Church. There are no Amens there, and they are never sung at the end of hymns at the University Sermon. I can dimly remember the use of them coming in, but I could never understand the reason for it. We have given up using the Amens in the Cathedral, and nobody seems to mind."

c. Another strange custom is seen when 'processional' and 'recessional' hymns are used. This is not the place to question whether hymns used for marching before and after the service are suitable; it may be that they mar the unity and symmetry of the worship. But what the choir-master should give his attention to is the remarkable habit of making the hymn fit the time of a procession either by clipping off the final verse or verses, or by repeating the first verse.

It is assumed that when we use hymns we regard them as things of beauty and things with meaning. To take a good hymn and cut off its ending is almost as bad as to take a good picture and cut off a piece of it; or forcibly to interrupt a preacher and prevent his giving his peroration.

A good hymn is a work of art, with a design and symmetry of its own; it is a complete organism with a beginning and an end. Sometimes there is not even a period between the verses. There are cases, however, where a hymn may be shortened if necessary, but seldom by the omission of the last verse. The repetition of the first verse can seldom give a reasonable meaning. It usually forms

the introduction to the whole. Sometimes it is a refrain repeated at the conclusion, as in 'Praise to the Holiest.' But it is sufficient to state the case: no further argument is needed.

Should there be need for extending the rendering of a hymn, there is a simple way of doing it: Interludes may be played between the verses. This is an old custom in hymn-singing, dignified, interesting and perfectly suiting the case.

CHAPTER XI

ANTHEMS AND SERVICES

It only remains now to gather together the threads of our various rules, principles, methods and suggestions, and to apply them to the interpretation of developed music. All that has been said as to chanting and hymn singing will be found to bear upon this more advanced work; no further directions will be needed.

Anthems and Services may be divided into five classes:

1. Plain-song.
2. The pure Choral Style.
3. The old English Cathedral Style.
4. The Modern Style.
5. Oratorios and Masses.

We may sum up by saying that, in studying all these, we must consider:

1. The general character of the music and the words.
2. Suitable pace.
3. Phrasing, in accordance with the words.
4. Leads and endings.
5. Pauses.
6. *Crescendos* and *diminuendos*.

7. *Rallentandos* and *accelerandos.*
8. Vocal tone.
9. Vowel quality.
10. Distinctness of consonants.
11. True expression.

The foundation work in the rendering of all Church anthems and Services should be sought in the unaccompanied singing of music of the pure Choral style, as exemplified by Palestrina and Tallis. Sir Hubert Parry writes: 'It was the necessity of regulating the amount of time which should be allowed to particular notes when singers sang together, which brought about the invention of the standard of relative duration of notes, and the whole system of semibreves, minims and crotchets; and also the invention of the time signatures, which do not necessarily imply rhythm but supply the only means by which various performers can be kept together, and irregular distribution of long and short notes made orderly and coherent. It is perfectly easy to keep instruments or voices together when the music is regulated by a dance rhythm; but in pure choral music, such as was cultivated from the tenth century till the sixteenth, it is quite another matter, for the parts were so far from moving upon any principle of accent, that one of the most beautiful effects, which composers sought after most keenly, was the gliding from harmony to harmony by steps which were so hidden that the mind was willingly deceived into thinking that they melted into one another. The mystery was effected by making some of the voices which sang the harmony move and make a new harmony, while the others held the notes that belonged to the previous harmony; so that the continuity of the sound was maintained though the chords changed.' ("The Art of Music," p. 83.)

The mystery of gliding harmonies is a thing more easily felt than described. The master must feel its spirit before he is able to impart it; but a few hints may be helpful in the rendering of music in the pure choral style.

a. The phrases should always end with a slight *dim. e rall.*

b. The time should be free.

c. The rendering should always be unaccompanied, for two reasons: — Because the dead tone of an instrument cannot blend perfectly with the pure living tone of the voice, and because the charm of this style of music lies greatly in the perfect untempered intervals, which can be secured only by the voices alone.

d. All hard accent should be avoided; a pressure upon emphatic words will give the true rhythm.

e. An even flow throughout should be maintained — what may be called a continuous stream of sound.

f. Long notes may always receive a *crescendo.*

g. Tied notes must be magnified into a little more than the written sign.

h. Points of imitation should be marked by increase of tone in individual voices.

i. The music need not be taken throughout by all voices together; some parts may be allotted to semi-chorus and solo voices. No directions under this head are ever given by the composers, therefore the interpreter is left free to use his own taste.

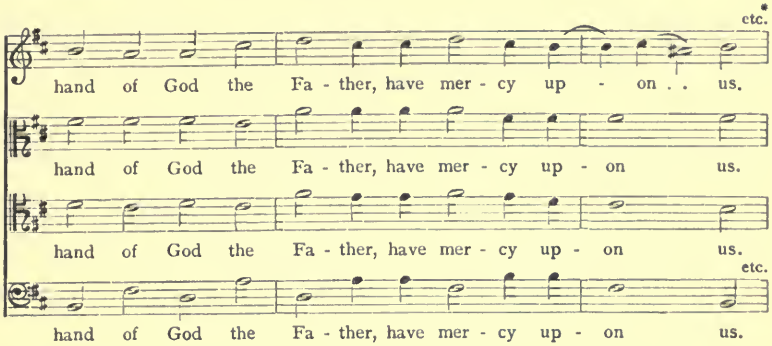
It will be at once apparent that the carrying out of these directions will produce a result completely different from that usually heard in the singing of this old music. Long experience and patient study will be necessary before true results can be achieved. It may be stated, however, without fear of contradiction, that no performance of any church music, even the most modern, can reach the highest plane, unless it has behind it the background of this pure vocal style — a style which may be unhesitatingly accepted as representing the most beautiful thing in the realm of musical art.

We conclude by giving a few illustrations from various sources.

1
1ST TREBLE
PALESTRINA
cresc.
f
Thee we . . . im - plore, ...
2D TREBLE
cresc.
f
Thee we . . . im - plore, ...
ALTO
cresc.
f
mp
Thee we . . . im - plore, and with thy stripes, . . . thy
1ST TENOR
cresc.
f
mp
Thee we . . . im - plore, and with thy stripes, thy
2D TENOR
cresc.
f
mp
Thee we . . . im - plore, and with thy stripes, thy
BASS
cresc.
f
mp
Thee we . . . . im - plore, and with thy stripes, thy
with thy stripes our souls . . . are heal - - - - - ed.
etc.
with thy stripes our souls . . . are heal - - - ed.
stripes, with thy stripes our souls are . . heal - - ed.
stripes, with thy stripes our souls . . . are heal - - - - - ed.
stripes,
etc.
stripes,

In the above lovely extract the marks of expression are those added by the editor, Miss Gregory. It will be noticed how much must depend upon the perfect intonation of the voices. An additional beauty would be obtained by making the two sustained voices in the third measure gradually die away, so that by the last beat the new phrase would have come into prominence. The new start in the fifth measure should have a little more tone than the preceding chord. In the eighth measure *diminuendo* would have better effect than *crescendo;* to render it properly will require perfection of voice-production. A slight *rallentando* will also be suitable for this phrase, with quickened time for what follows.

2
TALLIS
Thou that tak - est a - way the sins of the world, re -
Thou that tak - est a - way the sins of the world, re -
Thou that tak - est a - way the sins of the world, re -
Thou that tak - est a - way the sins of the world, re -
ccive . . our prayer. Thou that sit - test at the right
ceive our . . . prayer. Thou that sit - test at the right
ceive . . our prayer. Thou that sit - test at the right
ceive . . our . . prayer. Thou that sit - test at the right


etc.
hand of God the Fa - ther, have mer - cy up - on . . us.
hand of God the Fa - ther, have mer - cy up - on us.
hand of God the Fa - ther, have mer - cy up - on us.
etc.
hand of God the Fa - ther, have mer - cy up - on us.

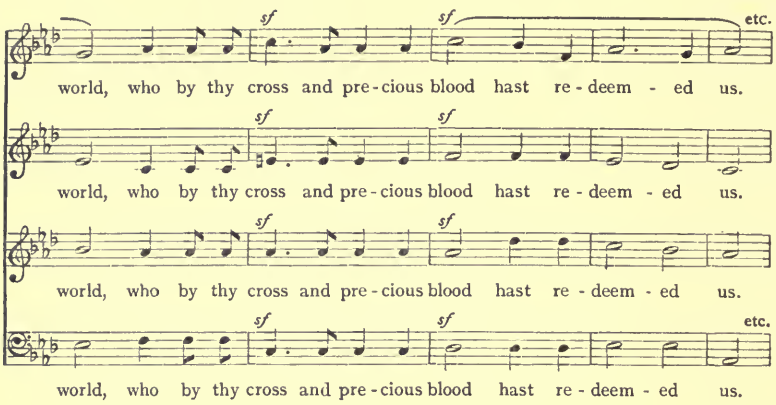
This is from the Service in the Dorian mode, and is much simpler in style than the last extract. The even *legato* of the voices will be maintained throughout. The dying effect will appear in the fourth and ninth measures. Notice the irregular rhythm in the fifth and sixth measures. Here there will be considerable hurrying of the time until the word 'mercy' is reached, and then follows the 'fall' of the voices.

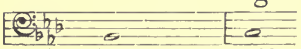
The underlying spirit of most of the directions given for the above extracts can be carried into the rendering of later music; and when the general feeling is retained, great will be the gain in all vocal music.

We will now take some examples by later composers.

3
Goss
mp
O Sav - iour of the world, O Sav - iour of the
O Sav - iour of the world, O Sav - iour of the
O Sav - iour of the world, O Sav - iour of the
O Sav - iour of the world, O Sav - iour of the

* For the remainder of this Service see Tallis' Communion Service, edited by A. Madeley Richardson. (G. Schirmer.)

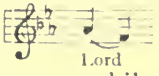

sf
sf
etc.
world, who by thy cross and pre-cious blood hast re-deem-ed us.
world, who by thy cross and pre-cious blood hast re-deem-ed us.
world, who by thy cross and pre-cious blood hast re-deem-ed us.
etc.
world, who by thy cross and pre-cious blood hast re-deem-ed us.

Here the first 'O' should be pressed rather than accented. All should be in perfect *legato*, especially the repeated notes for alto and bass in the second measure. It is sometimes difficult to get singers to understand this. The true effect might be indicated by writing as follows 

; there should be no more disturbance of the tone than is necessary to pronounce the consonants. The second phrase should have a little more volume than the first; the words 'cross' and 'blood' again should be dwelt upon, and the dotted note extended, in accordance with our rule.

4
WESLEY
p
Bless-ed be the God and Fa-ther of our Lord
Bless-ed be the God and Fa-ther of our Lord
Bless-ed be the God and Fa-ther of our Lord
Bless-ed be the God and Fa-ther of our Lord

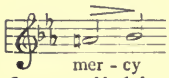
Je - sus Christ, which, ac - cord - ing to his a -
Je - sus Christ, which, ac - cord - ing to his a -
Je - sus Christ, which, ac - cord - ing to his a -
Je - sus Christ, which, ac - cord - ing to his a -
etc.
bun - dant mer - cy, hath be - got - ten us a - gain.
bun - dant mer - cy, hath be - got - ten us a - gain.
bun - dant mer - cy, hath be - got - ten us a - gain.
etc.
bun - dant mer - cy, hath be - got - ten us a - gain.

This passage, which appears so simple, is the test of a good choir. I have actually heard it accompanied on the organ, because the choir, considered a good one, could not keep the pitch; this, of course, entirely spoilt the splendid effect intended by the composer. What was said of the Goss extract applies to this throughout; the repeated notes should be regarded as indications of the points where the consonants occur, the vowel-tone should be as even and continuous as possible. This figure 

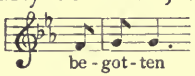
should have a slight pressure upon the first note, while both are expanded to a little more than the written length. Treat all such passages in a similar manner. All voices should end exactly together at the word 'Christ,' the consonants sounding on the third beat.

These:

should not be all the same in weight; 'ac-' will be light, '-cord-' heavy, '-ing' light.



This is an important case. Always take every such word *legato*, with the accent on the first syllable. It would hardly seem necessary to mention such an obvious fact, were it not that a different rendering is so painfully common, even with good choirs.

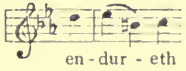
This: 

requires attention. The short note is the strong one, the long is the weak. It should be taken easily, as in speaking. Notice the infinite care that Wesley takes over the quantity and weight of every syllable. Would that other composers had the same literary instinct!

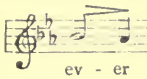
Allegretto
etc.
But the word of the Lord en - dur - eth for ev - er.
But the word of the Lord en - dur - eth for ev - er.
But the word of the Lord en - dur - eth for ev - er.
But the word of the Lord en - dur - eth for ev - er.
f
Allegretto
ff
Full Org.
etc.
f

The writer has heard the above splendid passage spoilt by the filling in of the rest with a chord on the organ, to assist the singers in getting under weigh. This should on no account be allowed. The effect depends upon the contrast between instrumental and vocal tone. A prompt

start can easily be secured by arranging that the choir-master (or somebody else) shall give a gentle but sharp stroke with a bâton to mark the silent beat; the singers, having taken a full breath, can then enter promptly upon the second. The whole should be given with tremendous vigour; then the effect will be electrical. This is another instance of Wesley's power of perfectly expressing the sense of the words, by attending to minute details of verbal structure.

At 

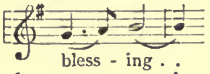
the last syllable must not be emphatic.

This: 

will be rendered, as before, *legato*, with a 'vanish' on the last syllable.

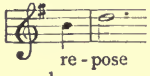
5
MARTIN
ppp
Ho - liest, breathe an eve - ning bless - ing, . . Ere re -
Ho - liest, breathe an eve - ning bless - ing, . . Ere re -
Ho - liest, breathe an eve - ning bless - ing, . . Ere re -
Ho - liest, breathe an eve - ning bless - ing, . . Ere re -
dim.
etc.
pose our spir - - - - its seal.
pose our spir - - - - its . . . . . seal.
pose . . our spir - - - - its seal.
pose our spir - - - - its seal.

This is a beautiful study in sustained singing. The tone should be the very softest it is possible to produce. There will be a very slight break in continuity after 'Holiest.' 'Breathe' will be only slightly opened out in volume. This



last syllable is unaccented; it must steal on the ear very quietly, and be held for the exact written length, the consonant being accurately given on beat two.

Here

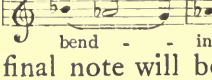


the voices should cling to the second syllable, and a breath can be taken after it.

The last three measures must have the 'linked sweetness long drawn out.' On no account allow any hurrying. Let the tenors bring out their tune, then the altos, theirs. The final note, though marked with a pause, will be quite long enough if held for exactly the written time.

6
MOZART
etc.
Hear me pray - ing, low - ly bend - - - ing.
Hear me pray - ing, low - ly bend - - - ing.
Hear me pray - ing, low - ly bend - - - ing.
etc.
Hear me pray - ing, low - ly bend - - - ing.

This wonderful passage from Mozart's greatest inspiration will be rendered with the most loving care. The voices will linger upon each note. The four chords in the second bar will increase slightly in volume as they proceed, with, as usual, a perfect *legato*. The soprano here

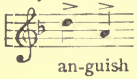


will dwell upon the syncopated note, increasing it towards its end. The final note will be delicately joined to the preceding, ending in a hush.

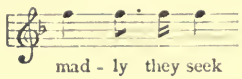
7 HAYDN

Allegro moderato
Dis - tract - ed with care and
Dis - tract - ed with care and
Dis - tract - ed with care and
Dis - tract - ed with care and
Allegro moderato
an - guish, When hearts de - spair - ing
an - guish, When hearts de - spair - ing
an - guish, When hearts de - spair - ing
an - guish, When hearts de - spair - ing

lan - guish, Mad - ly they seek for
lan - guish, Mad - ly they seek for
lan - guish, Mad - ly they seek for
lan - guish, Mad - ly they seek for
etc.
com - - fort Where it doth ne'er a - bide.
com - - fort Where it doth ne'er a - bide.
com - - fort Where it doth ne'er a - bide.
com - - fort Where it doth ne'er a - bide.
etc.

The fine motet of which this forms the opening ought to be known to every efficient choir. The usual fault to be corrected will be this rendering: 

which ought to be

In the following 

the average choir is certain to give insufficient time to the dotted note, and too much to the short one. This rhythmic effect is the characteristic feature of the whole composition, and should be insisted upon.

The second subject:

mezza voce, dolce
For us no rest re -
For
For us no rest re -
For us no rest re -
main - eth, If earth our love re - tain - eth, And
us no rest re - main - eth, If earth our love re -
main - eth, If earth our love re - tain - eth, And
main - eth, If earth our love re - tain - eth, And

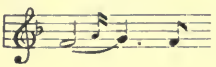
heaven we cast a - side, ... and
tain - eth, And heaven we cast, and
heaven we cast a - side, and
heaven we cast a - side, and
etc.
heaven . . . we cast . . . . a - side.
heaven we cast . . . . a - side.
heaven . . . we cast a - - side.
heaven we cast a - side.
etc.

is in complete contrast to the first, and will give another good opportunity for the study of the *legato* style. The four notes must be delicately joined together.

This

requires special attention. The two sixteenth-notes must be quite distinct, and in order to secure this they must be almost separated.

should be sung


should be taken

8
MENDELSSOHN
And dash in piec - es princ - es and na - tions,
And dash in piec - es princ - es and na - tions,
And dash in piec - es princ - es and na - tions,
And dash in piec - es princ - es and na - tions,
etc.
and dash in piec - - es princ-es and na - tions,
and dash in piec - - es princ-es and na - tions,
and dash in piec - - es princ-es and na - tions, princ-es and
etc.
and dash in piec - - es princ-es and na - tions,

Here is a fine instance of forcible singing. Perfect precision is demanded, distinctness of consonants, and unity in ending. The long tied chord in bar six must increase in strength, until at the end it will sound irresistible; it will also, in accordance with our rule, be slightly longer than is written.

will have its second syllable less forcible than its first; contrary to the favorite practice of choir singers.

9
Dvořák
Bless-ed Je - su, Fount of mer - cy,
Bless-ed Je - su, Fount of mer - cy,
Bless-ed Je - su, Fount of mer - cy,
Bless-ed Je - su, Fount of mer - cy, bless-ed
mf
etc.
Fount of mer - - - - cy,
Fount of mer - - - - cy,
Fount of mer - - - - cy,
etc.
Je - su, ... Fount of mer - cy, We, thy

Here choirs will try to evade the demands of the dotted notes; they will also want to emphasize the second syllable instead of the first in 'Jesu' and 'mercy.' It need not be again pointed out that for the two notes should be mentally substituted one, of twice the written length, divided only for the sake of the consonants. The basses in the fourth measure have an opportunity:

the three notes to 'Fount' must all be emphasized.

10
GOUNOD
pp
Thro' our harps that we hung on the trees . . Goes the
Thro' our harps that we hung on the trees . . Goes the
Thro' our harps that we hung on the trees . . Goes the
Thro' our harps that we hung on the trees . . Goes the
Bouche fermée
pp
etc.
low wind wear - i - ly moan - ing;
Bouche fermée
pp
low wind wear - i - ly moan - ing;
Bouche fermée
pp
low wind wear - i - ly moan - ing;
Bouche fermée
pp
low wind wear - i - ly moan - ing;
etc.
ppp
HARP

In modern music the device of *bouche fermée* is becoming more and more common. When properly contrived, the effect is beautiful; otherwise it is rather trying. It need not give nasal tone, though it so often does. Most singers

will shut the mouth tightly, getting a stiff jaw and producing thin, disagreeable tone. If they will hold the jaw loosely and slightly open the mouth, sounding a suggestion of an indefinite 'ŭ,' the result will be a dreamy, velvety tone, and a really musical effect.

The time has now come for the writer to lay down his pen, and he does so with reluctance. He took it up in the hope that he might be able to give the reader a clear vision of the possibilities of choir-training; he lays it down with the feeling that words can do but little to teach this wonderful art. No description can come near the reality of perfect singing; only the living voice can show of what the living voice is capable. Still he trusts that, pardoning the many shortcomings of this imperfect essay, the reader may glean something from its pages which will assist him in his efforts to realize the possibilities lying before him, and will take courage to go forward to regain some of the ground lost in the past, and to conquer fresh fields for the future.

Choir singing is one of Religion's keenest weapons. May it be polished and sharpened to fight and subdue the powers of evil, and to bring captive nations and peoples.

EXERCISES

AS GIVEN IN PART II

6
Ah
7
Ah
etc.
8
(lips)
Ah
Ah
etc.
etc.
etc.

9
Ah
Ah
Transpose to B♭, B♮, and C.
10
Ah
Ah
etc., to C.
11
Ah
etc.

12
Ah
Ah
etc., to C
13
M
Ah
p
etc., as before
14
Ah
Ah
etc., to D
15
Ah
Ah
etc.

16
M
Ah
etc.
17
Ah
Ah
etc., to C
18
Ah
etc., to C
19
Ah
etc.

23

THE SEVEN LONG VOWELS

OO. O. Ah. Er. A. E.

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